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"Frou Frou"

(Augustin Daly Version)

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NO. CCCLIX

FRENCH'S STANDARD DRAMA.

"FROU FROU;"

A Comedy of Powerful Human Interest,

In Five Acts,

BY AUGUSTIN DALY, ESQ.,

AUTHOR OF

the Gaslight," "Flash of Lightning," "Leah the Forsaken," "Griffith Gaunt," "Taming a Butterfly," &c., &c.

*Entered according to Act of Congress in the year 1870, by AUGUSTIN DALY, Esq.
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NEW YORK:
SAMUEL FRENCH & SON,
PUBLISHERS,
28 WEST 23D STREET.

LONDON:
SAMUEL FRENCH,
PUBLISHER,
89, STRAND.

CAST OF CHARACTERS.—[FROU FROU.]

As originally produced at the Fifth Avenue Theater, Tuesday, Feb. 15th, 1870

HENRI SARTORYS, (<i>The Husband of the Future</i>)	....	Mr. George Clarke.
BRIGARD, (<i>A Papa of the Present</i>)	.....	Mr. W. Davidge.
COMTE DE VALREAS, { <i>The "Friend" of the</i>		
	<i>Husband,</i>	{ Mr. G. Parks.
BARON DE CAMBRI, (<i>The Husband of the Future</i>)	..	Mr. James Lewis.
PITOU, { <i>The Prompter who believes Nature on</i>		
	<i>the Stage to be Abominable,</i>	{ Mr. G. F. De Vere.
VINCENT,		Mr. George Jordan, Jr.
ZANETTO, (<i>A Sunny Italian</i>)	.....	Mr. W. Beekman.
GILBERTE, [<i>"Frou Frou"</i>]	.....	Miss Agnes Ethel.
LOUISE, (<i>Her Sister</i>)	.....	Miss Kate Newton.
BARONNE DE CAMBRI, (<i>A Woman of the Future</i>)	..	Mrs. G. H. Gilbert.
PAULINE, (<i>A Maid of the Present</i>)	.....	Miss Fanny Davenport.
THE GOVERNESS,		Miss Emilie Kiehl.
ANGELIQUE,		Miss Amy Ames.
GEORGIE, { <i>Sartorys' Child: Her First Appear-</i>		
	<i>ance on any Stage.</i>	{ Miss Gerty Norwood.

TIME.—The Present.

SCENE—Act 1st at Charmarettes. Act 2, 3 and 5 in Paris. Act 4—Venice. Lapse of four years between the 1st and 2d Acts, and a few weeks between the 2d and 3d and 3d and 4th. After the 4th Act, six months elapse.

FROU FROU.

ACT I.

SCENE.—*Brigard's house at Charmarettes. Parlor of the Château opening on the terrace by three arches which cross the stage at back from R. 2, E. to L. 4 E. A table between each arch occupied with bronzes, flowers, &c. A pedestal with a vase of flowers, a table and a sofa on the L.*

PAULINE is discovered as the curtain rises, to merry music, arranging a bouquet in the vase at L. The noise of a whip is heard and she turns and looks off R. through the arches.

Pauline Who's coming now? [*Goes to the arches and looks off.*] Why, if it isn't Mademoiselle Gilberte and that charming M. de Valreas. What on earth can be the matter that they are galloping in that way? Ah, Monsieur might have spared his horse. Mademoiselle always comes in first. Now he's assisting her to dismount. They are coming here! [*She runs to the vase of flowers again.*] How long they are! [*Turns.*] Mademoiselle must have gone to her room direct. [*Returns to arch c.*] That's certain, for here comes M. de Valreas alone. How gracefully he bears defeat.

Enter VALREAS, R. C. looking back.

Valreas Beaten again! [*Sees PAULINE.*] You there! You see, Pauline, your handsome mistress and I have had another race.

Pau [*Laughing.*] And my handsome mistress come in ahead.

Val As usual! [*Throws hat and whip on sofa.*] Yes, I acknowledge I'm beaten, and what's more, Pauline, I don't regret it.

Pau [*Coming down c.*] You don't! Why not?

FROU FROU.

Val Because it's infinitely more agreeable to gallop behind than before her. She has such an adorable way of sitting a horse—and to see her—ah, delicious little Frou Frou! [*Crosses to L. H.*]

Pau What, Monsieur? You call her by that familiar name? Mademoiselle Gilberte would be very angry if she heard you call her Frou Frou.

Val Why, it's her name.

Pau It's her name for her father and her sister, but for you—

Val For me too! What name could I give her, indeed, more appropriate than that which seems to have been invented for the delicious little creature who bears it? What else is she but Frou Frou? A noisy, bustling, busy little fairy—ever rustling, rustling, like the leaves stirred by a gentle wind. Frou Frou, always; Frou Frou, everywhere! In the house a door opens and down the stairs comes a rustle of skirts like a whirlwind. Frou Frou, Frou Frou! [*Imitating rustle of silk.*] She bounds into the room with a joyous burst! She runs here and there—rummages about, disarranges everything—crowns, laughs, talks, sings, plays, jumps, and whisks away again. Frou Frou, Frou Frou, always Frou Frou! And I am sure, that while she sleeps, the angel that watches over her waves its rustling wings with that dear little sound, Frou Frou! [*Crosses R.*]

Pau Oh, indeed! [*Looking off L.*] Well, you'd better stop and be proper, for her father is just dismounting at the gate.

Val So I will, for I've something to say to him so prodigiously serious, so prodigiously proper, in fact, [*Laughing*] that I don't know how to begin.

Pau Something to say to Mademoiselle Gilberte's father?

Val Yes, to him, and then to her. Pauline, you are a young girl and you know what love is, don't you?

Pau Oh, I've had an ordinary education, sir, and love is one of the primary studies for girls.

Val Of course it is. It's addition isn't it? Or is it multiplication?

Pau Yes, sir—two and two make one.

Val Well, then, you can appreciate my feelings when I tell you that I adore her—I have adored her ever since—

Pau Two days ago, going on three! Here comes M. Brigard, sir; you'd better finish your declaration to him. [*Crosses to R.*]

Enter BRIGARD with BARONESS, in riding habit, C. from L.

Brigard [c.] Hallo, Valreas, what did you and Gilberte mean by running off and leaving us two alone to follow you? But then [*Looking at BARONESS with a look of gallantry.*] I don't complain!

B'ness [L. c.] Well it would be strange if you did.

[*Sits on sofa and fans herself with paper that is lying there.*]

Val [R. c.] Why, it was a wager between Mademoiselle Gilberte and me as to which should get here first, and when we did, she went to her room to dress for dinner while I waited for you.

Brig And amused yourself talking to the maid about her. *Pauline*, what's he been saying?

Pau [R. H. corner.] Saying, sir? [VALREAS motions her to stop]

Brig [Sitting c.] Yes, saying.

Pau He called Mademoiselle Gilberte Frou Frou, and asked if she had a heart.

Brig [Pretending seriousness.] What?

Val I didn't say anything.

Brig [To PAULINE.] That'll do. Go to Gilberte! [Exit PAULINE, R. 1 E.] So you've been trying to find out whether Gilberte has a heart, eh? [Looks at BARONESS and pauses.] Well, I'll talk to you presently; I must go and dress, and mind, before I come back, don't make anatomical investigations through any of the other servants.

[Exits R. 1 E.]

Val [Following him to the door.] Well, it's no harm, everyone has a heart. I didn't ask about her fortune or anything else that was mean.

B'ness Oh, Valreas! Valreas!

Val [Assuming air of gallantry.] Well, what have I done now?

[Crosses to c.]

B'ness [Looking at him through eye-glass.] I have known you for four years now, and if I were called upon to say what you are, I should be puzzled for an answer.

Val [Making a gesture of surprise.] What I am?

B'ness Yes, what you are.

Val [Approaching her.] I am only a poor devil who is dying of love for you.

B'ness Yes, I know—you've said that for four years and I see you are alive yet.

Val For four years and no intermission for refreshments.

B'ness Nonsense! you've been here two days and, during that time you've done nothing but make love to little Gilberte.

Val [Sitting beside her.] Don't you see that was only a little maneuver of mine?

B'ness To make me jealous?

Val Yes.

B'ness But how about that widow?

Val Widow? What widow?

B'ness Who is dying of love for you, who is determined to get a husband and who has followed you from Paris down to this place. Don't deny it. I know.

Val You know? [BARONESS nods yes.] Who told you?

B'ness Ah!

[Rises and crosses R.]

Val [Aside.] It's that rogue Brigard! [Rising.] Ah, I see you won't believe in the deep ardor of my affection. You won't.

B'ness [Meeting him c.] No I won't.

Val Decidedly?

B'ness Decidedly!

Val Then I'm perfectly right in lavishing the ardor of my affec-

tion on Brigard's little daughter. And you know what the consequences will be?

B'ness [*In surprise.*] The consequences?

Val Yes!—a wedding.

B'ness What? You marry? [*VALREAS nods.*] You marry?

Val Certainly! Won't she make a delicious little countess?—and the day we are married, what a gay, delightful, happy, joyous wedding we will have—with—

B'ness With music by Offenbach?

Val Well, why not? And then there are typographical and geographical reasons why we should marry. [*Goes up to c. arch.*] There on the right, is the château of our friend Sartorys; at the left, yonder, mine; and this one we are in makes a third, which my friend Brigard bought two years ago. Doesn't it strike you as odd now, as a sort of destiny, that Brigard, with his two marriageable daughters, should come and settle here, between two bachelors—Sartorys and myself?

B'ness It's quite delightful to hear you, I declare.

[*Returns to sofa.*]

Val [*c.*] You must acknowledge that Providence never more clearly manifested its intentions. Neither Sartorys nor I will oppose fate. First marriage, Md'lle Louise Brigard and Mon. Henri Sartorys; music by Haydn, solemn, grand; a union of wisdom and reason. Second marriage, Md'lle Gilberte and your humble servant; a union of just the opposite.

B'ness How do you know, sir, that M. Sartorys loves Louise and wishes to marry her?

Val How do I know? Why has he who never before spent a fortnight down at his château, now remained here—let me see—more than two months? Why, unless he wishes to marry her, does he come here every day?

B'ness [*Rising.*] Well, that's something.

Val [*Crossing L.*] And then he's so well suited to her. He's so quiet and she's so quiet.

B'ness [*c.*] But suppose that—

Val [*Going to her quickly.*] What?

Enter BARON DE CAMBRI, L. C, carrying a tin box, such as Botanists collect their herbs in, on his shoulder. Wears a wide, white hat.

B'ness [*Quietly.*] Nothing.

Baron Here I am, my dear.

Val Ah! good morning, Baron. What have you brought back from your early botanical excursion?

Baron Well, not much luck to-day. [*To BARONESS.*] Here, my love, is something which I selected for you. [*Offering an insignificant black flower.*] Ugly, but very rare. I dug it out of a mud-bank, my darling, at the risk of my life.

B'ness Dug it out of a mud-bank for me? Really, you are too good I don't care to rob the mud-bank.

Baron But, my dear, you don't know what this is—it is the far-famed Achyrophorous Calendula Borkorsia Alpina.

Val What?

Baron The far-famed Achyrophorous Calendula Borkorsia Alpina.

B'ness I don't care what it is. What have I told you, sir, repeatedly?

Baron Told me, my angel?

B'ness Haven't I forbidden you ever to appear before me with that abominable tin box, and those dirty rocks and rubbish?

Baron Certainly, my love. You have told me in the most positive manner. I will go and put the dirty rocks and rubbish in the next room and return immediately. *[Exits L. U. E.]*

Val *[Watching his exit and then quickly.]* Come, Baroness, you were about to say, just now—

B'ness *[Crossing L.]* I? When?

Val When I spoke of a marriage between Louise and Sartorys—

B'ness Oh, yes, I remember. I was about to say that it is evident you are in love with Gilberte, even if he be not with Louise. But I must go dress for dinner.

[Curtseys elaborately and exits L. 1. E. laughing.]

Val *[Taking the stage to R.]* Certainly I am in love.

Re-enter BARON without box.

Baron You see, my love, that it is only necessary for you to express a desire for to—

[Sees, for the first time, that the BARONESS has departed.]

Val She's gone, Baron.

[Sits R. beside table.]

Baron Gone, eh! well that's just like her. It's the Baroness all over. You enter the room—"Go out" she says, "and don't return until you have done this or that for penance." "You go out, you submit. You come back only to find that she's gone out herself and there are you, as it were, completely wrung out. That's my wife.

Val Ah! indeed!

Baron Don't sit there and say "ah! indeed!" in that way. You know it as well as I do.

Val Who? I?

Baron Oh, yes! you, and a good many others. *[VALREAS leans forward.]* You are not the only one who has been trying to make love to her. *[VALREAS draws back.]* Oh, I've had my eye on all your maneuvers.

Val *[Laughs.]* What an interesting subject of contemplation.

Baron Oh, yes! I've watched you all and I've pitied you. **VALREAS** becomes serious and angry. Oh! I could tell you some of the drollest things about the other poor devils. *[Laughs and then suddenly.]* But it would take too long. Let's speak of you alone. Now, for instance—

Val *[Assuming virtuous air.]* Me! Never! never!

Baron Oh, yes, you! You have tried three times to make love to my wife. The first attempt, as was natural, the day after that on

which I introduced you to her. The second—two years afterwards at the races. You remember, you rode a yellow horse there, as an amateur jockey, and you thought that by exhibiting yourself in an orange-colored jacket without any tails, and on a yellow horse, you could make an impression, ha! ha! Well, the Baroness and I had a good laugh over you that day. The third attempt, you have made here in this house. [VALREAS starts.] And it was because your third attempt was as unfortunate as the two first that you have commenced to adore little Frou Frou.

Val Pooh! You've been dreaming.

Baron Oh, you're right to give up the idea. The Baroness is not the woman to be made love to. Her temper is—is—so—so—well, it's tremendously unpleasant for me, but it reassures me as to every other man.

Val [Rising.] I congratulate.

Baron Oh! you needn't be sarcastic. I don't mind your temper, any more than your love making [Crosses to L.] It's no go, my dear boy, it's no go; so don't waste any more time over it.

[Saunters off, L. 1 E.]

Enter BRIGARD, R. 1 E., dressed for dinner.

Brig Hallo, are you still there?

Val Yes, I waited, because I wished to speak with you.

Brig Well, it's about time we had a little serious conversation.

Val I really believe it is.

Brig Gilberte has been telling me that while you were riding with her this morning, you began to talk in a singular manner about hearts, and affections, and other etceteras. Now what have you been saying to her?

Val Nothing that a young lady could not listen to.

Brig Oh! you think so do you?

Val Certainly, since I have made a resolution to turn over a new leaf and make amends for all my past follies.

Brig What?

Val Yes, I've made up my mind to marry.

Brig You marry?

Val Yes, why not? I was never more serious.

Brig That's not saying much. Now listen to me, my boy, I like you very much, really, very much. I've been about town with you for a couple of years; in fact, I showed you life when you first came to Paris. We've had jolly times together, and I like no one better than you. But as for giving you my daughter, never, as long as I live, friend of my bosom.

Val Why not? I would make her perfectly happy. In the first place, she would be a countess.

Brig [Crossing to sofa, L.] Oh! that's nothing.

Val Why not?

Brig [Putting his hands in his pockets and unintentionally jingling money.] You know, my dear fellow, if I chose, I could have a duke. [Sits.]

Val Humph! well it's rather bad taste to jingle your money in that way at me.

Brig Why, I never dreamed of such a thing, especially to you, who are richer than I. Besides, I take it all back about the duke.

Val [c.] And you will give me your daughter?

Brig What! my little Frou Frou? My little tempest? My little darling? Most certainly [*VALREAS jumps towards him as BRIGARD rises.*] not!

Val [Nettled.] Why so, since you like me?

Brig It's precisely because I do like you, or rather on account of the reasons that I like you. You see? You are too jolly a companion to be trusted as a son-in-law? Besides, there's that widow who is after you.

Val Devil take the widow. For two days I have taken refuge under your roof to avoid her. Doesn't that prove there's nothing serious in that quarter?

Brig Ah! you rogue. You can't tell me. Widows don't run about after handsome boys like you without encouragement.

Val But I'm determined to have nothing to do with her, to become a new man. I really believe if I had some friend who would stand by me now I might become worthy of existence and not the cursed nonentity I have been.

Brig [Eying him closely.] You really wish then—

Val [Grasping his hand warmly.] Will you?

Brig [Bursting out laughing.] Oh, anything to oblige a friend.

Val What do you mean?

Brig Oh! nothing. I'm going to drive the widow away.

[Going c.]

Val That's right, and when you return I will address you formally with my request.

Brig [Stops.] What request?

Val Why, my request for your daughter, of course.

Brig What! you've got back to that again, have you?

Enter LOUISE, R. 1. E.

Ah! Louise, you've just come in time. [*To VALREAS.*] Now talk to her about your preposterous ideas.

Louise [c.] What ideas?

Brig Come, out with it.

Val [R. c.] Oh! you needn't try to frighten me.

Brig [Returning, takes LOUISE's hand.] It is perfectly well understood in this household, that in this little brain [*Tapping her forehead.*] dwells all the wisdom of the Brigard family; and that all questions of serious import must be referred to Louise.

Louise Well?

[Seriously.]

Val Well, I've just asked of your father, the hand of Md'll^e Gilberte in marriage.

Louise The hand of Gilberte?

[Surprised and then smiling.]

Val [Seriously.] What do you answer, Mademoiselle?

Louise [c.] My answer is, that if you do not make haste and dress for dinner, the same thing will happen to-day that occurred yesterday—you will be late.

Brig [L. c.] There, are you satisfied?

Val Very well, as no one will listen to me seriously—

Louise [Crossing L.] Go and dress for dinner.

Brig [Aside to VALREAS] You still authorize me to go to the widow.

Val [With dignity.] Certainly, sir.

Brig Then I'm going.

[Exits c. and L.]

Louise [To VALREAS] Haven't you gone yet?

I shan't go until you tell me why you oppose my marrying Gilberte.

Louise Well, I suppose I must, or you'll never be ready.

Enter VINCENT, L. c.

Vincent Mon. de Sartorys.

LOUISE rises and turns towards c. and L. as if with pleasure as SARTORYS enters c., and VINCENT goes out.

Sartorys Mademoiselle.

[Bows to LOUISE.]

Louise Did you see my father?

Sar I've just met him. [To VALREAS.] I hope you are well, Paul?

Val [Mournfully.] Very well—that is, when I say very well—ah! my dear friend, if you only knew how they treat me in this house.

Louise [To VALREAS.] You'll never be ready for dinner.

Val [To LOUISE, who looks at him, laughing.] I'm going! I'm going!

[Exits L. 1 E., sighing.]

Louise [To SARTORYS.] How late you are to-day!

[Her manner must evince love for him and pleasure in his company. She motions to a chair; they sit.]

Sar [Seriously.] I suppose I'm late, because I left home earlier than usual. [LOUISE laughs.] I'll explain. I was in such a hurry to get here that I started from the Château at a full gallop: but, when I got within a hundred paces of the gate, I stopped, turned my horse, and for a whole hour, walked him about the neighborhood. I came back to the gate three times and three times turned away again. The fourth time, however, I did like all cowards when they make up their minds to be brave. I plunged in head foremost and here I am a little later than usual, perhaps, but still, here I am.

Louise [Who has followed him with interest and laughingly, but now beginning to show her emotion.] What was the cause of this hesitation?

Sar It is because I have decided to say something to-day that I have wished to say for the last month. That is the reason why I trembled all the way here and why I still—

Louise [Confused.] If what you have to say is so very serious—

Sar [Earnestly.] It is.

Louise [Moved.] Perhaps you had better wait—

Sar Oh no, I must positively go through with it to-day. Besides, before I speak I can gain courage by remembering how good you

have always been to me. And then, your father authorized me to—

Louise Oh! if papa—

Sar He did! and more than that, *he said* I must first speak to you.

Louise [*Deep emotion.*] To me!

Sar [*Taking her hand.*] Have you not guessed? I am in love.

Louise [*Scarcely audible.*] You love!

Sar Yes! I love, madly, devotedly—your sister! Gilberte!

[*LOUISE as if petrified, at first says nothing, simply raises her eyes to SARTORYS, then—*

Louise Gilberte!

Sar Did you not suspect it?

Louise [*Breathless.*] No.

Sar [*Without looking at her and as if speaking to himself.*] It seemed to me as if everybody must have noticed it.

Louise You love my sister?

Sar Yes, and that is why I appeal to that friendship which you have always shown me. Tell me, then, what you think of this avowal which I have just made? [*Pause.*] You do not answer.

Louise I understand you perfectly. You love Gilberte and you ask me—

Sar If you approve of this marriage.

Louise [*Crossing before him.*] I approve—I approve of it.

Sar [*Rising.*] You will be on my side then?

Louise Yes, for I know of no man more worthy, no one who could—better than you—

Sar [*Interrupting her and taking her hand, which she withdraws in pain.*] Thank you, Louise, thank you.

Louise [*Slowly and looking at him with a melancholy smile.*] At first I was surprised, you understand? It is necessary, you know, to become accustomed to an idea. And now—I am so. [*This said after a struggle with her own emotions, which she conceals from SARTORYS.*] You are just the husband I would have chosen for her, for I have often thought of Gilberte's marriage, and sometimes with fear. Her wilfulness and frivolity have made me tremble for the future.

[*Sits on sofa.*

Sar Ah!

Louise And I have never thought until this moment, that in order to save her from any danger, it was only necessary to give her to a man like you.

Sar Do not let us blame what you call her frivolity, for I confess to you it is a little on account of that I love her. Still, if you think it best, I will try to teach her—but by degrees—

Louise How much you love her!

Sar Yes.

Louise But why did you come to me?

Sar Because your father told me it was you I must speak to—

Louise Well, you have spoken to me and I have answered you
And now, [*SARTORYS sits beside her.*] what more?

Sar You—you will speak to her, to Gilberte for me?

Louise I!

Sar If I tried to speak myself, the same thing would happen that happened a while ago, I should go wandering wildly about, afraid to come boldly up to the gate—I mean the point. Or, if I did speak, what I would say might be more disastrous than my silence. She might laugh, and then—I prefer that you should speak to her. Tell her all the good you can of me, and even a little more—that will do no harm. But, I beg of you, don't say that my character is serious or severe; there is the greatest danger. Tell her that, in spite of my appearing quiet, and grave, and awkward, that I love her as madly as any of the young fellows who surround her. [*Rising.*] Oh! if you only knew how I have envied Valreas, who can make love to a dozen women, one after the other. Tell her, above all, not to think me stupid; for, by an unfortunate fatality, those who can love the most are always the ones who know least how to speak of love.

Louise [*Rising.*] Yes, yes—I promise.

Sar [c] You will speak to her? When?

Louise [L. c.] As soon as I see her. In a few minutes.

Sar [*Agitated.*] In a few minutes?

Louise Do you not wish me to?

Sar Yes, but not while I am here.

Louise Certainly not! But what will you do while I am pleading your cause?

Sar I will go out there—in the park—and walk up and down. I will not lose sight of this room. [*Joyously.*] If the answer be “yes,” you will have but a sign to make; if it be “no”— [*Sadly.*]

Louise If it be no?

Sar I will mount my horse and return home.

Louise [*Holding out her hand.*] Without a farewell?

Sar Ah, Louise! all my life hangs on yes or no. [*Listening off R. Music.*] Hark! do you not hear her? Her footsteps on the staircase? The rustle of her skirts?—

Louise Always the same noisy Frou Frou.

Sar She comes like a little tempest.

[*Gets R. U. S.*]

Enter GILBERTE in dinner toilet, like a whirlwind, R. 1 E. holding a bracelet in her hand.

Gil [c.] Louise, fasten me this?

Louise What?

[*SARTORYS gets down R. gradually.*]

Gil This bracelet! I can't! [*Holds out her left arm; LOUISE fastens the bracelet.*] Good gracious! how your hand trembles! What is the matter with you? [*Seeing SARTORYS, extends her right hand to him, LOUISE still retaining the left.*] Your servant, Mon. Sartorys!

Sar [*Taking her hand.*] Mademoiselle.

[*Bows.*]

Gil Why, your hand trembles too! [*SARTORYS and LOUISE look at each other, each holding a hand of GILBERTE.*] What, both of you? Why, what's going on here?

Louise [*To SARTORYS.*] Well, sir, since it is impossible for you to remain quiet—

[*Smilingly.*]

Gil [*Knowingly.*] Oho!

[*Laughs.*]

Louise You had better go and walk about a little.

Sar Yes, Mademoiselle, I am going—to walk about a little.

[*Exits C. and L. with last gesture to LOUISE.*]

Gil And now, my dear sister, [*Taking both her hands.*] let me beg your pardon for coming in so abruptly and spoiling your tête-à-tête. But why did he go away? He should have stayed here and kept quiet, and, as soon as I saw which way the wind blew, I'd have gone around the room as if I was looking for something, and then—fizz! gone out again and left you two to yourselves. That's the way to manage it. You see I know.

Louise You were perfectly right in coming, Gilberte, and still more so to stay. It was of you we were talking.

Gil Of me?

Louise Mon. Sartorys asks for your hand.

Gil [*Amazed.*] What do you say?

Louise I say that Mon. Sartorys has asked for your hand. He has spoken to father already, and he, knowing the affection I have for you, my dear Gilberte, advised him to speak to me.

Gil My hand! Sartorys! Impossible! You must be mistaken.

Louise But I am not mistaken.

Gil Then he is mistaken. It is you that he is in love with.

Louise It is you.

Gil I?

Louise He told me so, and begged me to repeat it to you, and—

Gil Well!

Louise He waits for your answer.

Gil My answer! Now? Before I've time to take breath! And you say he spoke to papa about it?

Louise Yes.

Gil And papa left it to you?

Louise Father could not give the answer, it is you alone.

Gil No, no, no, no! It's too serious for me. I have always said, when the question of my marriage came, I would go and find my sister Louise, who is so good and so wise, and I would beg her—

Louise No, Gilberte, no.

Gil Yes, yes! I do as papa does—I refer it to you. You must decide for me. I will give whatever answer you advise me.

Louise [*With an effort.*] In that case, I advise you to answer—yes!

Gil Louise, have you reflected?—

Louise Yes. Sartorys' merit is universally acknowledged.

Gil Oh, I know he has merit, a great deal too much, perhaps.

Louise How so?

Gil Louise, sit here with me. [*LOUISE on sofa, GILBERTE chair.*] I am going to speak serious now. Monsieur Sartorys, I acknowledge, is a man to whom it is almost impossible to say no. Let me see—what do they say he will yet become with his talents?

Louise Oh! minister somewhere—an ambassador.

Gil [*Playfully.*] And I would be an ambassadress! That would be nice, if it were only in Paris. [*Seriously.*] But if I do him justice, I must do myself the same. I am full of faults; you know it and so do I, and it seems to me that these faults of mine are the very ones Sar-

torys should wish in a wife if he hoped to be entirely unhappy. [*She laughs, LOUISE makes a gesture of disaffirmance.*] Oh, you think he would cure me? I am sure he could not. I have always been spoilt—by papa first, then by you. By you still more than papa. [*LOUISE makes same gesture.*] Yes, still more. And, what is still more, I am positively decided to remain hopelessly ill of those faults and never to be cured, for I am perfectly satisfied with myself just as I am. If I married M. de Sartorys we would have such battles.

Louise He loves you. Gilberte.

Gil Are you very sure?

Louise Did you not see a little while ago?

Gil [*A pause; she reflects*] And so it is I he loves. [*Laughs.*] What a funny idea. [*Rises.*]

Louise [*Animated; rising.*] Is it nothing to be loved by such a man? To see that he trembles before you like a child? [*Still more animated.*] It seems to me if I were asked who is it I love, I should say with pride: "Look for the man who is superior to everyone about him—it is he."

Gil [*Going to her and putting her arms around her waist.*] Do you know one thing, sister Louise?

Louise What is it?

Gil I will not marry Mon. Sartorys.

Louise Why?

Gil [*Demurely.*] Because, up to this time, I thought that you loved him; and now—I am sure of it.

Louise I?

Gil [*Patting LOUISE's cheek.*] Yes, you.

Louise [*Very quietly.*] If I loved him I would not advise you to marry him.

Gil [*Moving away*] Louise, I'm become afraid of you. I believe you are—first, capable of sacrificing yourself for me and then of being proud of the sacrifice.

Louise [*Going to GILBERTE and putting her arm about her waist.*] Then, this time, little sister, you are wrong. My affection for you is certainly very great, but, however great it might be, if I loved, I would not—

[*An imperceptible look of pain passes over her face, not seen by GILBERTE.*]

Gil [*Doubtfully, and looking down.*] Do you speak truly?

Louise [*Gaily.*] Absolutely. And if you have no other objection to this union—

Gil Objections! Oh, I've plenty of them; but I don't know whether they amount to anything. So I will do as I have always done—place myself in your hands. Must I say yes, or no? [*LOUISE about to speak.*] Do not answer too quickly. Be serious; and before answering, think of everything.

Louise I have thought of everything.

Gil And you believe—

Louise I believe that Monsieur Sartorys will be too happy with you, for you not to be always happy with him.

Gil [*Smiling.*] So I must answer Yes?

Louise [*Kissing her.*] You must answer Yes.

Enter BRIGARD, L. U. E.

Brig Well, have you spoken to her?

Louise [c.] Yes.

Brig And her answer?

Louise She consents.

Brig [*Kissing GILBERTE.*] You little angel!

[*LOUISE goes down R. H., just pressing handkerchief to her eyes, and recovering immediately.*]

Gil So you are satisfied, papa?

Brig I'm delighted! And now I can give that young rascal, Valreas, a categorical answer.

Gil Answer! about what?

Brig [*Laughing.*] Why, he asked for your hand, too.

Louise [*Turns laughing.*] So he did.

Gil [*To BRIG.*] And that makes you laugh? [*To LOUISE.*] And you, too? Well, it is very probable that if he had spoken to me I would have laughed more than either of you. [*Gravely.*] Who knows, perhaps that folly would have been the most reasonable. However, it is decided.

Brig But—

Gil Don't let's say anything more about it. It is decided. [*Curtseys and laughs.*] Consider me an ambassadress. [*Goes R. to LOUISE.*]

Brig [c.] So I can call in poor Sartorys, who is in the park?

Gil In the park?

Brig [*Goes up c.*] Yes; there he is, look at him.

Gil [*Laughing.*] Poor fellow! Yes, call him in.

Brig Sartorys, here! Sartorys! Come here, a moment, my boy; I've something to say to you.

Enter VALREAS, L. 1. E., in full evening dress, with a large camelia in his button-hole.

Val Well, you see I'm not late for dinner! [*Seeing every one silent.*] Hallo! something's going on!

[*He goes to BRIG, L. C.*]

Enter SARTORYS, quickly, L. U. E. LOUISE advances to meet him. GILBERTE remains R. C. SARTORYS C.

Louise [*To SARTORYS.*] You will dine with us, Monsieur. Gilberte begs you to remain.

Gil [*Holding out her hand.*] Yes, I ask you.

Sar [*Crossing LOUISE and kissing GILBERTE's hand.*] Oh! if you only knew how happy—

Gil I know.

[*LOUISE saunters up c.*]

[*They go up R. C.*]

Val [*Aside to BRIGARD, bringing him down.*] What's to become of me!

Brig [*Aside to VALREAS.*] Well, now, I hope you'll let me alone.

Val [*Same.*] Then I suppose I'd better look after the widow?

Brig [*Same.*] She's gone.

[*Goes up c. to LOUISE.*]

Val Gone! Well, that's consoling.

Enter BARON and BARONESS, in full dress for dinner, L. 1 E.

Val Ah, Baroness! what a delicious toilet.

[*Kisses her hand.* BARON *puts glass to his eye, and looks on VALREAS complacently.*]

Bar [*Aside to VALREAS.*] What is going on? Ah! M. de Sartorys and Gilberte. I thought so.

Val Exactly. It's a match. What kind of music would you suggest for that marriage? eh?

Bar What music? Music of the future. We will wait and see.

Val Gilberte gone! the widow gone! Baroness, I have no one to adore now, but you.

Baron [*Nudging VALREAS.*] Go it, my boy. Fourth attempt. [*Takes stage R.*]

Brig To Dinner!

[BRIGARD and LOUISE, VALREAS and BARONESS, SARTORYS and GILBERTE, BARON. *Curtain.*]

ACT II.

SCENE.—*The house of SARTORYS, in Paris. Sofa R., front to audience. Piano behind sofa, up and down stage. Round table L. H. Chimney L. H. Large mirror over mantelpiece. Flowers and pedestals about room. Marble bust on stand C. Picture of FROU FROU on easel above L. table. Chairs R. and L. Walls covered with pictures. Arm chair L. of table.*

PITOU *discovered, hat in hand, sitting on chair L., with book and roll of music in hand.*

Pitou The greatest folly of a fashionable woman is to appear on the stage of a theater; the next to the greatest folly is to wish herself there; and the folly before that is to take part in private theatricals. [*Rises.*] But they all do the last—all. [*Goes to piano and touches it.*] Good instrument—musical taste, evidently. [*Yawns.*] I wish some one would come. I've been waiting five minutes since I sent up my card. [*Adjusts eye-glass and looks from picture to picture.*] Not bad—not bad.

Enter PAULINE, L. 1. E.

Pauline Madame will see you, sir, in a moment. She expected you. Monsieur Pitou, is it not?

Pitou Yes, Mademoiselle. M. Pitou, of the Theater Palais Royal.

Pau Oh, yes! you have been anxiously expected by Madame! she wishes to see you about—about—pshaw, about—

Pitou [*Dryly.*] You don't know why? [*PAULINE shakes her head.*] You her maid, and not know what she's doing?

Pau Oh, I know when she goes out to walk with M. de Valreas.

Pitou M. de Valreas 's a charming gentleman. He adores Madame Sartorys! eh?

Pau He may do what he pleases, but Madame adores only her husband.

Pitou And does her husband approve of this little affair?

Pau What little affair?

Pitou Why, the private theatricals that Madame and the Baroness de Cambri and M. de Valreas are getting up.

Pau Private theatricals! oh, that Baroness! she never gives a poor girl a chance to learn anything that she's up to. So quiet—so sly!

Pitou Yes, very quiet now. Once on a time, when I was a little younger, she was the belle of Paris—such adventures, too! Ha!

Pau And so they are getting up private theatricals! and is my lady going to act in them?

Pitou I should think so! I bring her the prompt-book and music to-day for her part.

Pau And what is her part?

Pitou Cleopatra, in the burlesque Vaudeville entitled "Antony and Cleopatra." Do you know it? [*PAULINE shakes her head.*] Why, Cleopatra is a little grisette who lodges in a garret. Antony is a poor devil of a fellow, who lives in the attic next to hers. They meet at a masked ball—they come home together—the sheriffs are about to seize him for debt—she lets him out of his attic into her garret—they elope, and the curtain falls.

Pau And is madame—a lady—rich—distinguished—the wife of a Statesman like M. Sartorys—going to act the part of such a vulgar grisette?

Pitou [*Shrugging his shoulders.*] It's only private theatricals, you know. Besides, the Baroness de Cambri and M. de Valreas selected the part. And then, you know, rich ladies like to act the parts of saucy servant maids in private theatricals. They love to imitate the low lives they scorn. Now, you—you would like the part of a duchess if you were to act—wouldn't you?

Pau Wouldn't I? I want to be a queen.

Pitou Why don't you go on the stage? I'll teach you. You have a good figure, if it's properly dressed; and a good face, if it were properly painted.

Pau No, sir! My face and figure are natural, and I'm proud of it.

Pitou Natural, my dear! [*Eying her through glass, and patting her cheek.*] You mustn't be proud of nature if you want to be an actress. No one wants to be *natural* on the stage, where the daylight is gas-lamps, the moon green calciums, the landscape painted canvasses, the gold dutch metal, and the diamonds tin!

Pau But I thought actors and actresses were praised because they were natural.

Pitou Nature—nonsense! The actor who should strive to be natural would be a blundering booby, and the public would like him as little as they do raw meat on the table, although meat in a state of nature is raw. Human taste wants cookery, that's all. Natural acting, my dear, is only nature, boiled, baked or roasted. [*Music.*

Gilberte [*Without.*] Pauline!

Pau Madame!

Enter GILBERTE C. from L.

Gil Pauline, send at once for my dress. I will not dine at home to-day, and I must have that dress. I must have it before six o'clock.

Pau Yes, Madame.

[Exit R. 1. E.]

Gil [To PITOU.] You have lost no time, sir.

Pitou Not when I knew it was Madame I was to oblige.

[Bows profoundly.]

Gil You know me, then?

Pitou Oh, yes. I also know the father of Madame—M. Brigard—a very lively gentleman. He comes very often to our theater; and sometimes behind the scenes, and sometimes—

Gil That will do. What have you brought me?

Pitou [Giving book.] Your rôle in the Vaudeville. If Madame only knows the part by the printed book, Madame can have no idea of it. This is the complete part, with all the gags in the margin.

Gil The gags!

[Sits on sofa.]

Pitou [c.] Yes, Madame; the additions which the actors who played in the piece have added to their parts.

Gil. Very well; and now we want the music.

Pitou I have copied it.

[Giving roll.]

Gil [Reading.] Air: "Galop du Tourbillon." What air is that?

Pitou I will play it for Madame. *[Goes to piano.]* Like this.

Gil Will I be able to sing that?

Pitou Oh, yes, for Madame can't have a worse voice than some of our public singers. Will you practice it?

Gil Go on, I'll try.

[A knock is heard at the door. PITOU stops. It is repeated.]

Gil [Turning towards R. H.] Who is there? No one is to come in.

Sartorys [Without.] It is only me, dear.

Gil Oh, only you. Come in.

Enter SARTORYS, R. 1. E.

My dear, this is M. Pitou, from the Theater. Go on, sir.

Sar From the theater?

Gil Yes, you know. It's about the little piece I'm to play in for the benefit of the poor.

Sar I had something to say to you—but I'm sorry I interrupted—

Gil Oh, M. Pitou can come again. You can come again, M. Pitou.

Pitou Whenever you please, Madame. You have only to send me word at the Theater Palais Royale. *[Saluting.]* Monsieur—Madame!

Sar [c.] Good morning, Monsieur.

[Exit PITOU, c. and L.]

Gil [Coming down to SARTORYS.] You know what it's all about. It's for the performance—a magnificent performance—got up by Madame de Cambri. for the benefit of the poor.

Sar And what does Madame de Cambri play in this magnificent performance?

Gil She don't play anything—she gets it up.

Sar That's her way.

Gil How her way?

Sar I mean that while you and the others are running about, acting on the stage, she is sitting very tranquilly in front with the other guests, criticising your performance.

Gil [*Sitting on sofa.*] You don't like her.

Sar I don't like her, and I don't dislike her. She is merely a woman of the world—that is all

Gil And I—what am I?

[*Looking at him roguishly.*]

Sar [*Standing beside her.*] The most adorable little actress in the world.

Gil Very pretty, indeed. [*Turning over the leaves of her part.*] You wished to speak with me?

Sar Yes.

Gil [*Turning over the leaves of her part and speaking heedlessly.*] Speak away.

Sar [*Looking discontentedly at the book she is studying.*] It was about something entirely disconnected with this magnificent performance for the benefit of the poor.

Gil [*Same bus.*] Something serious?

Sar Very serious!

[*Same bus.*]

Gil [*Same bus.*] That's nice. Go on.

Sar [*Taking chair by sofa.*] My darling, I wanted to say—

Gil [*Interrupting him.*] What is the costume of a *debardeur*?

Sar [*Surprised.*] The costume of a *debardeur*?

Gil Oh, you can't make me believe you don't know what the costume of a *debardeur* is.

Sar Why, the costume of a *debardeur* consists of a loose silk shirt and a—a pair of little pantaloons of velvet or satin.

Gil And what else?

Sar Hum! Buttons—plenty of buttons.

Gil And then?

Sar A little cap.

Gil And after that?

Sar Nothing.

Gil Nothing! Oh, I'll never wear that costume—not even for the benefit of the poor. I must find something else. And now, my dear, I'm ready to listen to you.

Sar I've seen the Minister of State this morning.

Gil [*Putting down book.*] You told him to come, of course.

Sar To come where?

Gil To our performance.

Sar Well, no; but I will tell him! This morning we spoke of an appointment they have for me. They want me to take an embassy abroad.

Gil [*Alarmed.*] Abroad?

Sar You see, there is nothing in Paris they can give me.

Gil [*Pettishly.*] And where do they want you to go?

Sar To Carlsruhe! Ambassador to Carlsruhe. Isn't that splendid?

Gil Oh, very splendid. And how far is Carlsruhe from Paris?

Sar I don't know exactly—three or four hundred miles; fifteen hours by rail.

Gil As far off as Baden?

Sar It is very near Baden.

Gil [*Rising.*] Near Baden! why didn't you say so before. [*Crosses L.*] you said it was abroad. I'll tell you how we'll manage it. [SARTORYS rises.] You shall be Ambassador to Carlsruhe—that's settled. [SARTORYS takes her hand.] I'll go and pass the summer with you at Baden, and the balance of the year you will come to Paris and see me as often as you can.

Sar How!

Gil [*Gleefully and rapid'y.*] And I may—but mind, I don't promise it—I may come and surprise you at Carlsruhe.

Sar [*In a tone of disappointment.*] But—

Gil [*Stopping astonished.*] Why, you didn't think of taking me to Carlsruhe?

Sar Why, yes.

Gil Alone—we two way off there—all the year?

Sar Why not?

Gil But that would be to die—of happiness, I know—but to die, nevertheless. [*Smiling and coaxingly.*] Come, you were not serious? can you imagine Frou Frou without Paris?

Sar Well to tell you the truth, I did! [GILBERTE turns away pettishly.] But I see I must do one of two things; go to Carlsruhe without you, or decline the mission.

Gil [R. H.] Well.

Sar [C.] I have decided.

Gil [*Interested.*] You will go without me?

Sar No; I will decline.

Gil Ah, that will be right. [*Goes to him.*]

Sar Do you think so? I doubt it myself. But one thing I'm sure of—I haven't the heart to leave you.

Gil [*Putting her arm about him.*] You love me, then, a little still, after four years of marriage.

Sar Yes, Gilberte! and I am only afraid that I do not know how to love.

Gil [*Archly.*] Oh, yes, you do. You know very well, for the very best way to love a wife is to let her do everything she wishes—because then, you know, the wife is bound in honor to do everything her husband wishes.

Sar [*Taking her hands in his.*] Then, if I ask you something—

Gil After what you have done for me, can you doubt?

Sar Then, suppose I ask you not to play at this performance.

Gil [*Withdrawing her hands.*] Oh, my love.

Sar Well.

Gil I thought you were going to ask me something reasonable. It is impossible for me to refuse to play now; and then, you will see how pretty I will look in a *debardeur* costume—if they insist on it. But in anything I'm sure to be pretty, and you will be so proud of me.

Sar What—with the pantaloons? [*Looking at watch.*] I must go.

Gil Where?

Sar To the Minister, to give my answer. On my way, I will see our little Georgie in the Park.

Gil Isn't Georgie here?

Sar No; we took advantage of the beautiful day to carry him out for a walk. He was ill, you know, this morning.

Gil He was ill?

Sar Didn't you know? But it was nothing.

Gil How could I know? I told them to bring him to my room every morning. [*Rings bell on table sharply.*] And now I remember I have not seen him to-day.

Enter PAULINE, R. 1 E.

Pau The dress has come, Madame.

Gil I don't want the dress—why was not Georgie brought to me this morning?

Pau The nurse brought him to your room, but you were asleep, and yesterday, when we brought him, we woke you, and you were angry.

Gil How dare you?

Sar [*To GILBERTE.*] Never mind. [*To PAULINE.*] You can go.

Exit PAULINE R. 1 E.

Gil I was angry! What sort of way is that to speak?

Sar You see, I wouldn't permit you to be spoken to in that way. After all, [*smiling*] she was right, though. [*GILBERTE about to speak.*] Now, I must go.

Gil You will kiss me, at least, before you go.

Sar [*Kissing her forehead and holding her for a moment.*] Ah, Gilberte, Gilberte!

Gil Don't be long. You know I dine with Madame de Cambri.

Sar When—to day? I was not invited, was I?

Gil Oh, no! All our husbands are to be excluded, in order that we may have full liberty to talk about our costumes in the performance—you can dine at the club, can't you?

Sar No; I have some writing to do this evening. I'll dine at home.

Gil What—all alone?

Sar Alone? oh, no! I shall have Georgie. Good-by. [*Kisses her hand.*] Good-by.

[Exit c. and L.]

Gil [*Snatching away her hand and standing, c., pouting.*] With Georgie! I understand what he means, but nothing is more unjust. [*Goes to sofa.*] It looks as if I didn't love my child. [*Sits.*] I love him as much as any of the women that I know love their children. I can't take him myself to walk in the Park, and carry his hoop. [*Laughing and clapping her hands.*] I don't know but that might be a pretty sight, though. It would be a novelty, anyway. [*Looking at clock.*] Bless me, almost three, and at this hour the Baroness was to be here with M. de Valreas to rehearse our scene. [*Jumping up.*] and I don't know a word of my part.

[*Opens the part which PITOU gave her, goes to piano, touches it and recites*—
 “I’ve a pretty litte waist,
 Black hair and eyes of blue.”

BRIGARD *appears at c.*

Is that you, papa?

Brig [*Applauding.*] Go on, you little rogue, go on!

Gil [*Singing.*] “I have a heart that burns and
 A face that must please you.”

Brig Ha, ha, ha! What are you singing comic opera music for?

Gil [*Going to him, c.*] I was studying my part. I’m so glad to see you—and Louise?

Brig Very well, indeed. I’ve come to say good-by.

Gil Are you going away?

Brig Yes—to-morrow morning. I’m off to Bohemia.

Gil To Bohemia! [*Laughs*] Have you been appointed Ambassador to look after the theaters in Bohemia?

Brig Nonsense, my dear. It’s only one of my little freaks. You know how flighty I am. But I wanted to talk to you about Louise.

Gil You are not going to take her?

Brig No—and that’s the reason that—

Gil I see—you want her to come here.

Brig Yes, until I come back. I shall be away three months.

Gil Well, she shall; but not for three months, nor for six, but for always. Since she has taken it into her head never to marry, she shall live with me. You know, papa, how much I love Louise, and you know how I have tried time and again to induce her to come and live with me. She has always refused before, and I don’t know why.

Brig Don’t you? Why, she was afraid of incommoding you.

Gil Why, we have four times as much room as we want.

Brig That wasn’t it. She was afraid of interfering with your happiness.

Gil Oh, that was all very well during the honeymoon; but now, after four years—

Brig You’d better not talk to her in that style—

Gil I know how to talk to her to make her stay with me.

Brig Well, she’ll be here to-day; all you have to do is to prevent her going away again.

Gil I’ll do that, if I have to lock the door.

[BARONESS *appears at c.*

B’ness Can we come in?

Gil Certainly.

[BARONESS *comes down, followed by* BARON.

Brig [R.] I am delighted to see you Madame, since it allows me to bid you farewell before my departure.

Baron [R. c.] Going to leave us, Brigard? Where to, now?

B’ness [c.] To Bohemia, I understand.

Baron I believe Bohemia is celebrated for its hair-dye, isn’t it?

Brig Well, I’m not going there to lay in a stock of hair-dye, I assure you.

Baron Well, I wouldn't go, either, if I wore a wig. [*All laugh.*]

Brig [*Crossing up c.*] He, he, he! Very funny. Allow me to wish you good day.

B'ness Good-by, Bohemian.

Brig Respect my gray hairs, Madame.

B'ness [*Looking through eye-glass.*] I don't see them.

Brig True; I forgot. I haven't had time to grow any yet.

Baron Bravo! Repent of your sins, old boy, and turn bald.

[*BRIGARD exits c. and L., followed by BARON.*]

B'ness [*Sitting on sofa.*] That horrid man, my husband, my dear, met my carriage and would come with me. And you know I must humor him a little; he has a claim on me. He's my husband. But what is this I hear about your sister Louise coming here?

Gil [*On sofa.*] Yes, she's coming while papa's away; and after that I hope—

B'ness You hope?

Gil That she will never leave me.

B'ness [*Regarding her closely.*] Ah! [*Pause.*] And you will take her with you to Carlsruhe?

Gil I am not going to Carlsruhe!

B'ness Sartorys is going alone, then?

Gil He has declined the mission.

B'ness I congratulate you, my dear. See what it is to be loved. [*Laughing.*] After that it's unnecessary for me to ask if he consents to your taking part in our little theatrical performance.

Gil Well, he consents, but—

B'ness Never mind the "buts," my dear, so long as he consents. Have you studied your part?

Gil All but the last scene.

B'ness Oh, the whole thing will be a great success. I'm sure of it. And Valreas, who is to act your lover in the piece—

Gil When he *does* act it! He don't study a word.

B'ness Oh, he'll play it, and for the best of reasons.

Gil What is that?

B'ness He's dead in love with the person he's to play with.

Gil Dead in love with me! nonsense! you who know him so well can believe that?

B'ness It's just because I do know him so well that I say it.

Gil [*Crossing to L.*] Now you are laughing at me.

B'ness [*c.*] I've known Valreas to be in love when it was a laughing matter, but this time

Gil [*L. c.*] Well, this time?

Enter BARON C. from L.

Baron Ladies, Valreas is coming up.

B'ness [*R. c.*] Now, my dear, you shall see.

Baron [*c.*] Hey? See what?

B'ness Keep quiet.

[*BARON starts up stage—BARONESS crosses to GILBERT L. C*]

Enter VALREAS, C. from L.

Val [*Bowing at door.*] Madame! Ah, Baron, where are you going?

Baron I? I am going to keep quiet. [*Sits R.*]

B'ness [*With a gesture to GILBERTE.*] Come, Monsieur, make your adieux. The news was true—your friend Sartorys is appointed to Carlsruhe, and Gilberte leaves us in eight days.

Val [*Starting forward.*] How?

[*GILBERTE looking down and motionless*]

B'ness Immediately after the performance.

Val [*To GILBERTE, with emotion.*] You are going to leave Paris?

B'ness [*Aside to GILBERTE.*] What did I tell you?

Gil [*Arousing herself.*] Come, let us begin the rehearsal.

[*Crossing to R.*]

B'ness [*To VALREAS.*] I was only joking—she's not going to leave Paris—how could she?

Gil [*R. c.*] Come—the rehearsal.

Baron Rehearsal! Bless me! Where am I? What part am I to take?

B'ness That of a spectator, who will be put out if he interrupts the performance.

Baron Then let me get a front seat [*Brings chair down.*] And now, go ahead.

Val Let me see what is it we are to rehearse.

Gil Only the last scene. I haven't read it yet.

Val [*Crossing to L.*] Come then—the last scene.

Baron If I don't see the whole performance, I want my money back.

[*BARONESS crosses to and expostulates with him.*]

Gil [*To VALREAS.*] I'm sure you don't know a word of your part.

Val Don't I? I staid up all night to study it. [*Takes part out of his pocket.*] I'll repeat it without looking at the book. [*To BARONESS.*] But you will be ready to prompt me?

B'ness Oh, I'll take care of that.

Gil What is the scene?

Val The stage represents two apartments, separated by a wall. I'll fix it. [*Places 2 chairs in c. up and down stage.*] This is the wall, and here between the two chairs is the door. [*Places a third chair for door.*] Cleopatra, that's you, in one room; Antony, that's me, in the other.

Gil But I thought in the last scene Antony was in Cleopatra's apartment. [*L. of chairs.*]

Val [*L. of chairs.*] Oh, we'll come to that. Now take your place there. Allow me to open the door.

[*Pulls away middle chair, and GILBERTE passes through to R. H.*]

Gil Now we're right. Where will you go, Baroness?

Baron Come, clear the stage.

B'ness I'll be prompter; give me the book. [*Takes book, and sits L. down stage opposite BARON.*] Now we're off.

Gil Let's begin where the constable has just gone—

Val To look for the Commissary of Police?

Gil That's it.

Val You commence.

Baron Ring up the curtain.

[Commences to applaud.

B'ness What are you about?

Baron Giving them a reception, my dear ; it encourages them.

Gil [Ceasing to speak naturally, and playing a little awkwardly, which she must do throughout this "rehearsal."] "He is gone! He is gone!"

Val [Playing with animation.] "Bravo! bravo! Hurrah!"

Baron [Applauding.] Bravo! bravo!

Val [To *BARON*.] My dear sir, you put me out.

B'ness [To *BARON*.] Will you be quiet?

Baron I thought he was starting the applause. Go on.

Gil "He is gone! he is gone!"

Baron Stop! stop! you said that before.

Val [Coming in front of chairs and bowing to *BARONESS*, then *BARON*.] The management begs me say—

Baron He's going to apologize. Some of the actors are sick ; have to change the piece.

Val —That unless order is preserved, the performance can not proceed

Baron [Applauds. To *BARONESS*.] I suppose he means me.

B'ness Sh!

Gil "He is gone! he is gone!"

Baron Well, this is the most vividly interesting play I ever attended.

Gil Please, Baron! "He is gone! He is gone!"

[*BARON* turns away in disgust.

"But he will return with the Commissary. They will force the door! Pray, sir, [as if through wall] no more of your fooling."

B'ness Very good! Very good, indeed!

Baron [With the air of a connoisseur.] Yes, very good! Really very good.

Gil Isn't it? "Pray, sir, no more of your fooling." [To *Baron*.] And you will see at the performance I will do it even better.

B'ness Now you. "Ah! a light—"

Val I know without prompting. "Ah! a light breaks in upon me. I will clear my apartment, and put all my furniture into yours."

Gil "In my room?"

Val "Why not; since I'm about to marry you?"

Gil "Before the Mayor?"

B'ness [To *GILBERTE*.] In the book it says you must speak that line very quickly.

Gil Haven't I said it quickly enough?

B'ness [Imitating *GILBERTE*.] No; you said it this way—"Before the Mayor!"

Gil [To *VALREAS*.] Shall we go over it again?

Val With all my heart. "Since I'm about to marry you.

Gil [With a rush.] "Before the Mayor?"

[All applaud her.

I hope that I did it then.

B'ness That time it was excellent.

Gil [*Repeating.*] "Before the Mayor?"

Val "Quick! quick! open the door."

Gil "No, no; I dare not. [*To B'ness.*] What do I do then?"

B'ness [*Referring to book.*] The book says you run to the window and look out.

Gil Oh, yes; so I do. [*Goes to side and pretends to look out.*] "Ah, the police are coming, led by the Commissary. Gracious, what a long sword he has; and heavens, what a long nose he has!"

Val "I'll make it longer yet, when I get hold of it. Open the door, quick."

B'ness [*Referring to book.*] Now you open the door between your apartments.

Gil So I do! [*Goes to chair and stops.*] And what do I say then?

Baron Why, you say come in.

B'ness No, you don't. You say, "So much the worse. Now let's be off."

Baron So she does. I forgot.

Gil [*Throwing down the middle chair, which represents the door.*] "So much the worse. Now let's be off."

Val [*Rushing to her with outstretched arms, as if to embrace her.*] "Now we'll be off."

Gil [*Eluding him in earnest.*] Stop. What are you going to do?

[*VALREAS pauses.*]

B'ness What's the matter? Go on.

Val [*Smiling.*] Madame don't seem to be willing.

B'ness [*Referring to book.*] He's right. The book says, "He kisses her as they go off."

Gil Does the book say that?

[*Comes down to BARONESS, who shows her the book. BARON also looks over it with eye-glass.*]

Baron Yes; there it is. "He kisses her as they go off." [*With emphasis.*] I should like to play that part myself. [*Crosses to his seat again.*]

Gil [*L. c. very promptly.*] Well, we'll go off without that.

Val [*C. As GILBERTE goes up.*] What? I agreed to play the part on that account alone.

Gil Well, perhaps on the night of the performance I may—

Val [*Sitting down.*] Very well; I'll perform it very badly if I don't rehearse it.

Baron Oh, he must rehearse it, you know. Here [*Going up.*] let me show you.

B'ness Sit down, sir.

[*BARON subsides.*]

Gil Come, let's go on without the kissing.

Val No. I won't go on.

Gil I appeal to the Stage Manager. [*Turning to BARONESS.*] Ought he to kiss me at rehearsal?

B'ness Certainly—

[*GILBERTE undecided, and turning away.*]
Besides, my dear, you know it's for the benefit of the poor.

Gil [*With an emotion which she tries to conceal.*] Well—if you say so.

Baron [*Pitying GILBERTE's distress.*] Oh, well; come, now; if she don't want to.

[*BARONESS makes signs for him to be quiet. VALREAS jumps up, approaches GILBERTE, whose back is to him (her face bowed, and turned up the stage) and then stops.*]

B'ness Well, what are you stopping for?

Val [*Confused.*] I— [*Approaching nearer to GILBERTE, with respect.*]
Madame!

[*Takes a single lock of her hair in his hand, and presses it to his lips. At this moment, and on this picture, LOUISE appears in c. d. BARON and BARONESS rise. Embarrassment on part of all. LOUISE comes down c., looking with astonishment at all, and at the disordered furniture.*]

Val [*Turning and picking up chairs.*] Take care, Mademoiselle, one moment. [*Replaces chairs.*]

Louise Thank you.

Gil [*To LOUISE.*] We were rehearsing.

Louise I'm sorry if I interrupted you.

B'ness Oh, as for me, I'm glad you did, for we were almost at the end of the piece, and [*Looking at her watch.*] I had almost forgotten that I should be at home now. [*To BARON.*] Come along, my dear. [*Goes up c. as LOUISE crosses down L., and speaks to GILBERTE, who still remains R. u. s.*] You intend to keep her with you? [*BARON goes over to LOUISE, and tries to speak with her. She is intent on watching GILBERTE and BARONESS.*]

Gil Certainly!

B'ness Don't forget that you dine with me to-day, and that we have another rehearsal to-morrow.

Gil I will not forget.

B'ness Come, Baron.

Baron Certainly, my dear. [*c.*] Somehow or other I don't believe that young lady likes my wife.

B'ness [*Up L. c.*] Valreas, your arm.

Val [*c. Saluting GILBERTE*] Until we meet again, Madame. [*To LOUISE.*] Mademoiselle. [*Bows. Louise returns the salute gravely. VALREAS and BARONESS exeunt L. c. BARON goes to GILBERTE R. c. Shakes hands with her; then crosses to LOUISE, but scared by her demeanor, hurries out L. c.*]

Gil [*Running to LOUISE.*] My dear, dear Louise.

Louise Dear sister! [*Kisses her affectionately.*] What has happened?

Gil [*Archly.*] Don't you know? [*LOUISE signifies "No."*]
A great happiness is in store for me. Sit down here with me. [*Places her arm about LOUISE and leads her to sofa.*]

Louise [*After they sit.*] Well?

Gil [*Taking both LOUISE's hands.*] Suppose I have a sister!

Louise A sister?

Gil Yes; a sister whom I love very much; and suppose, after being separated from her for four years, I find her again, all of a sudden, when I can hope to keep her with me forever!

Louise What do you mean, my dear Gilberte?

~~Gil~~ That now you are come, you are to remain with me all my life. I have arranged it with papa.

Louise But I have heard nothing of this.

[Enter SARTORYS, C. from L.]

Sar [Taking LOUISE's hands.] Ah! they told me I should find you here

~~Gil~~ Have you seen the Minister?

Sar Yes.

~~Gil~~ And what did you tell him?

Sar What I promised. All is finished.

~~Gil~~ Ah! how much I love you for that. And to console you for the mission you have lost at Carlsruhe, I give you a mission to perform here.

Sar A mission?

~~Gil~~ Yes; and an important one, too. Papa is to leave to-morrow for three months; and he and I have arranged that Louise shall remain with us while he is away; but after that--

Sar [Playfully.] What then?

~~Gil~~ You must decide the rest.

Louise [Troubled.] Gilberte! What are you saying?

~~Gil~~ [To SARTORYS.] She thinks that she will incommode us. You must tell her she is foolish to say such things; and that instead of being in the way, her presence here will be of the greatest service. You know how to manage her; and you can persuade her to stay, if you tell her she has a duty to fulfill here. [GILBERTE throughout this speech is speaking to SARTORYS, and at LOUISE, to whom her eye now and then wanders significantly.] Tell her that there are ever so many important things for her to do here—wearisome things, in fact, that bore me, and exhaust me, but will make her happy—they always did; for she loves serious duties. [Rises and crosses to L. of him.] You tell her everything you can think of to make her stay. I haven't a moment's time to spare now; and, besides [To LOUISE.] our little Georgie loves you so much. [Pointing to SAR.] Only see how lucky it is you came in as you did, for he was going to dine here—all alone. And now you can dine with him. [Moving off L.] I give him to you. You must take my place. [LOUISE rises, as if about to speak.]

Not a word; it's fixed. I'll run and tell them to serve dinner for two; there now. [Runs out L. 1 E.]

Sar [Taking hands of LOUISE.] Gilberte is right. You must stay with us. I won't hear any denial. It's settled.

Louise But it is not settled.

Sar [Laughing.] Not if I get vexed?

Louise Not if you get vexed.

Sar Not even if I beg you to remain?

Louise [Crossing.] Not even if you beg me to remain.

Sar [Seriously.] Louise! [Taking her hands.] You will render Gilberte and myself a great service by staying with us; for then something that is very much needed in this house will be needed no longer.

Louise [Withdrawing her hand.] What is needed here?

Sar A wife

Louise What is this you tell me?

Sar I say that what is needed in this household is a wife ; and you know it, although you pretend that you do not. [*F'ause.*]

Louise [*With emotion.*] What has happened?

Sar Nothing has happened. Everything is the same now as always, with us. I love Gilberte more than ever I did.

Louise I know it. [*With a smile.*] But I don't see what great misfortune that is.

Sar You don't see?

Louise No.

Sar Then you shall. This morning I was appointed Minister to ——. You have heard of it?

Louise Yes ; and I was prouder than ever of you.

Sar I told Gilberte, and she said to me she would never consent to leave Paris.

Louise And then you—

Sar I refused the honor they would have conferred upon me. I refused it for her sake ; and with the same satisfaction that I would feel in making her a present, no matter how simple. And yet by that refusal I know I have sacrificed that brilliant fortune that had been my life-long dream. I refused it because I love Gilberte, and she permitted me to do so—because she loves me not.

Louise Sartorys!

Sar When you gave Gilberte to me—because it was you who gave her to me—

Louise [*Turning partly away.*] Yes ; it was I.

Sar You said to me, "You are the fittest husband for Gilberte ; and her frivolity will cause me less fear for her, when she is the wife of a man so wise as you." You did not think then what so wise a man as I could become. Those faults in her which made you fear, and which I might have cured by a little firmness, I refused to perceive then, because I loved her. I love her to-day as I loved her from the first ; but now, after four years, you will find in Gilberte the same faults, only the faults have become greater.

Louise But her child?

Sar She adores him. A little while ago Georgie was seriously ill. Gilberte passed eight nights at his side, sleeping but an hour at a time. By day she was never from him. Her love and watchfulness alone snatched him from the grave. He recovered ; then for whole weeks she saw him only five minutes in the morning and five minutes at night.

Louise Who took care of him then?

Sar His governess ; and I, when I could.

Louise What you tell me is dreadful.

Sar Yes. And if Gilbert and I must remain alone, abandoned to one another, who can tell what will be the end of it all. [*Taking her hands again.*] But if some one else—

Louise Some one else—

Sar Some one who is good, and kind, and wise, would come between us ; would take control of this household, which every one

neglects; would perform those duties which Gilberte avoids, and which I have not the will to press upon her.

Louise But you must; it is your duty.

Sar I know it is my duty; but I have not the strength to perform it against her. You can now see how the danger which now threatens her house, and which I know not how to avert, may become greater every day. [*Smiling.*] It is one of those situations of which it is difficult to speak without a smile: a frivolous wife and an indulgent husband. They have been seen before—they will be seen again; and that is all there is the matter here! The danger is about us. Neither Gilberte nor I can avert it; but I sincerely believe you can defend us against it.

Louise [*In a low voice.*] You think so?

Sar We must keep you with us. The course pointed out by Gilberte was right; and now you know you have a duty to perform.

Louise [*Facing him.*] A duty?

Sar A duty. And never was an accident more providential than that which sent you to us.

Louise It is well. I remain.

Sar Thanks.

Enter VINCENT, with a package of letters and papers, and a shaded lamp, lighted, which he places on table R.

Louise [*Aside. Crossing to R. H. COR.*] This, then, is their happiness! [*Music.*]

Enter GILBERTE R. 1 E., "en grande toilette," noisily. GEORGIE, unperceived by her, is holding on to her skirt, and half hidden by it.

Gil I am late. [*To VINCENT.*] Order the carriage immediately.

[*VINCENT still fixing papers at table.*]

Do you hear? immediately! [*To SARTORYS.*] She will stay, won't she?

[*Exit VINCENT, c.*]

Sar Yes.

Gil [*c.*] Then this is a good day's work. I'm so glad. [*Goes towards LOUISE, but perceives that GEORGIE has hold of her skirt.*] Take care, take care; you will tear me! [*Repulses him brusquely, and looks at her robe.*]

Louise [*R. c.*] Come to me, Georgie.

Gil Yes, go to your aunt.

[*GEORGIE runs to LOUISE and embraces her.*]

Gil You see you did well to remain. Your duties begin at once. You will all dine together very nicely. But let me see: before I go, I must install you. [*To SARTORYS, seating him in chair.*] Now, here are your letters, and your papers, and your darling politics. [*She spreads on the table before SARTORYS the letters, &c., which VINCENT brought in.*] And you, Louise, you will sit there in my place.

[*Places arm-chair by chimney, to which LOUISE crosses with GEORGIE.*]

Enter VINCENT. c. from L.

Vincent The carriage, Madame.

[*Exits c.*]

Gil [Going up c.] Now, I must be off. [Stops in doorway and looks back.] How charming you all look, that way. [Laughing.] A delightful little family group. [Kissing her hand to each.] For you. [To LOUISE.] For Georgie. For you. [To SARTORYS.] [Exits laughing with childish glee. SARTORYS looking after her. LOUISE bending down embracing GEORGIE. Quick curtain.]

ACT III.

SCENE.—*Same as Act II.*

Enter BARON followed by VINCENT

Baron [As he enters.] You are sure the Baroness has not called here this morning?

Vincent Positive, Monsieur, no one has called to-day; not even M. de Valreas.

Baron Why do you say "not even" M. de Valreas?

Vin Because he comes here every day.

Baron The young jackanapes! and what does he come for?

Vin I suppose to see master, although he always sees Madame.

Baron [Looking at him sharply.] Eh?

[VINCENT smiles, shrugs his shoulders and goes to mantel.

Baron What an imprudent little creature Gilberte is! The servants begin to talk, and what's worse, to shrug their shoulders. Hang the rascals.

[Goes to sofa, picks up a book and turns his back on others.

Enter PAULINE, R.

Pauline Vincent, has the porter returned with the answer to Madame's letter?

Vin [Yawning.] The answer?

Pau "The answer"—Stupid, yes, the answer—don't I speak plainly?

Vin [Lazily.] Let me see, the letter was to M. de Valreas, wasn't it?

[BARON looks up from his book.

Pau. What are you saying things over and over for? you know Madame is waiting impatiently.

Vin Yes? Well the porter has not yet returned with the answer.

Pau Then go along with you, and don't stop dawdling here. [VINCENT curls his moustache and smiles.] What are you smiling about?

Vin Oh, nothing! But I will go watch for the porter who brings the letter for Madame from M. de Valreas. [Sauntering up.

Pau What airs you put on. Let me tell you if you look that way, 'll inform Madame Sartorys.

Vin Oh, no! you'd better inform M. Sartorys.

Pau Well, I will, if you like that better. I won't allow Madame's

name to be smiled at and shrugged at all over the house by you or anybody else.

Baron [*Dropping book.*] Bravo! That's right! [*To VINCENT.*] Now you go and grin somewhere else about the house, will you?

Vin Certainly, if Monsieur wishes it, with pleasure.

[*Exits C., with final smile at PAULINE who turns away impatiently, and he goes off shrugging his shoulders.*]

Pau I beg pardon, Baron.

Baron What for? For defending your mistress? Don't, you are right. My wife's maid does the same thing. I like to hear her.

Pau My mistress does nothing to require defense.

Baron That's right. I like to hear it.

Pau [*Becoming excited.*] Madame is everything that's good—but these self-sufficient valets they think they see more than any one else.

Baron So they do—but they don't.

Pau [*More excited.*] No, indeed—for there's nothing to see.

Baron Of course not.

Pau [*Quite warmly.*] What is there in Madame's receiving an answer to a letter; if you write a letter, it's natural to expect an answer.

Baron It is—it certainly is—don't get into a passion about it.

Pau I know I came from the country, but I know my place better than to act like this fellow, who is always talking and shrugging his shoulders whenever M. de Valreas comes here. What's it his business, I'd like to know. Suppose your servants, Baron, should talk to one another, and smile and shrug their shoulders whenever a young gentleman came to see your wife, and suppose—

Baron [*Uneasily.*] No, don't—don't suppose it. My servants never smile except when they get their wages, and I have their coats made so tight that they can't shrug their shoulders.

Pau Oh, that's excellent.

Baron Yes, a man must get round his servants somehow. But let's change the subject. I'm waiting here for my wife—she usually comes here in the morning—that is, she says she does.

Pau Oh, yes, Monsieur. Sometimes alone, and sometimes with M. de Valreas!

Baron [*Crossing L.*] Oh, hang de Valreas!

Enter GILBERTE, R. C., salutes BARON who bows.

Baron I thought perhaps my wife might be here. She said she was coming. If I'm not in the way—

Air [*Coming down C.*] By no means. [*BARON goes up L. C.*] Pauline!

Pau [*R. C.*] Yes, Madame.

Gil [*Low and with emotion.*] The messenger has not returned?

Pau [*Low and modestly.*] No, Madame!

Gil That will do. [*Exit PAULINE, R. 1 E.*] [*Coming down. Aside.*] What will be his answer? To such a letter there can be but one answer; that he obeys me, and will leave Paris at once.

Enter BARONESS, C. from L., dressed for walking and in a great hurry.

B'ness [*To GILBERT. without regarding BARON.*] Ah, my dear! [*Comes forward with outstretched hands.*]

Baron [*Quickly.*] Ah, my dear!

Advances towards her with outstretched hands; she passes him and goes to GILBERTE. who is near L. C., and who extends her hands quietly and without demonstration. Baron rubs his chin and goes over to R.

B'ness Get your bonnet, my dear, and come out with me, quickly.

Gil [*Listlessly.*] Where?

[*Sits at table.*]

B'ness Oh, such a sensation! you remember the account in the papers about the jealous husbands in the Rue du Petit, who came home suddenly the other morning, and shot the other poor fellow, and then escaped; you remember the papers were full of it. Well, the house is going to be sold—furniture and all—and every one is going there to look at it; not to buy much, only a keepsake or so. You must come with me, we will pick up something.

Baron I wouldn't go there, my dear, if I were you.

B'ness [*Looking at him through eye-glass.*] Perhaps not. People with bad consciences ought not to. You ain't afraid I'll come home suddenly some morning and shoot you or anybody else, in our house, are you?

Baron No, my dear, husbands are not generally shot.

B'ness More's the pity—they deserve it.

Baron Oh! well, my dear, if you do go to this sale, and pick up "anything" as you say—

B'ness Well?

Baron Don't let it be the example of the lady of the house.

[*Exits in a pet, C. and L.*]

B'ness Rely on that, dear! By-by! But come, my dear Gilberte, put on your things.

Gil. [*Seriously.*] You must go without me

B'ness. [*C*] Why?

Gil [*Constrainedly.*] I can not go. But don't let that hinder you. You can go alone.

[*Rises.*]

B'ness [*Astonished at GILBERTE's manner.*] Of course I can. But come here a little my dear. [*Using GILBERTE's shoulder to turn her round.*] and let me look at you.

Gil [*Looking at her.*] Well!

B'ness [*Drawing a long breath.*] Hem! I don't know! Too serious for such a pretty face, much to serious.

Gil Does that make you uneasy?

B'ness Seriousness is a bad sign in a house that is not used to it. And what makes me really uneasy, my dear, is I think I can divine the cause.

[*Significantly.*]

Gil No, no, you can not, I assure you.

[*Quickly.*]

B'ness So much the better, if I am deceived—and a certain hot-headed young fellow of my acquaintance, named Valreas has nothing to do with it.

Gil [*Starting.*] Valreas?

B'ness Hasn't he now? Not the least bit?

Gil Well, yes, he is concerned—

B'ness [*Interrupting her.*] I thought so.

Gil [*Quickly.*] But you are deceived very much indeed, if you think there is anything serious. I can prove it to you in a few minutes.

Enter VINCENT with a letter, C. from L.

Is that the answer from M. de Valreas?

Vin Yes, Madame.

Gil Ah! [*Takes letter from VINCENT and opens it eagerly. VINCENT exits looking back and shrugging his shoulders as he goes off. GILBERTE hands the letter to the BARONESS.*] There! [*Crosses to sofa while BARONESS reads.*

B'ness [*Reads*] "You order me to leave Paris. I go to-night."

Gil [*Earnestly and turning.*] Now you see.

[*Sitting.*

B'ness I see that there is more danger than I supposed. For him to send such a letter to you—you must have written to him.

[*Sitting beside her.*

Gil Of course. A letter in which I ordered him to leave Paris.

B'ness In which you ordered him to? Come, my dear, see what position you are in! You remember how I laughed at first, when we had our rehearsals, let me see—two months ago, at Valreas being smitten with you. I thought it was only play—an agreeable way of passing the time; I never dreamed of your taking it seriously, for I thought I had to do with a reasonable woman, a woman like myself, and if any one had suggested seriously that I should fall in love with another man than my husband, it would absolutely look to me as if, after submitting to a sound drubbing for the sake of duty, I had solicited another for the sake of pleasure. Those are my principles; I thought they were yours too, for who could imagine, that Valreas, a mere boy, a charming boy to be sure, but perfectly laughable as a lover, could inspire a real sentiment, and become—well, I won't say dangerous.

Gil You may say dangerous.

[*Smiling.*

B'ness No I won't. I don't want to say it.

Gil Yes, dangerous! And I'm glad of it. [*BARONESS starts.*] Because the knowledge of this danger that I run, is the first serious thought which ever entered my head; [*Smiling.*] and when that entered, several others equally serious, slipped in after it.

B'ness [*Warningly.*] Take care, my dear!

Gil A number of things to which I never paid any attention, now appear to me in their true light. Do you remember what you said to me the day I told you my sister was coming to live with us here?

B'ness What did I say?

Gil You said—"Ah!"

B'ness Well that wasn't much.

Gil Well, after Louise had been installed here, I began to perceive that it was less agreeable to me than I thought at first. When I saw her take so gently, so aptly, my place beside my child, beside my husband, there came to me certain thoughts, and I recalled your "Ah!" and I began to understand it.

B'ness Perhaps it would have been better if you had not seen so much.

Gil [*Resolutely.*] I saw what I ought to see, and nothing more; but I shall put a stop to all this by taking a decisive step.

[*Rising excitedly.*]

B'ness [*Alarmed.*] A decisive step?

Gil [*Crossing.*] Yes.

B'ness [*Rising.*] What step? you frighten me.

Gil [*Excitedly—returning and stopping c.*] I am determined to regain the place I have lost; to commence to live very differently from the manner in which I have lived up to this day. [*BARONESS smiles incredulous'y.*] You don't believe that I can?

B'ness Oh, yes, I believe it.

Gil [*Crossing to sofa.*] Believe it or not, as you please, I am decided.

[*Sits.*]

B'ness [*Going over to her.*] A word of advice, my dear Gilberte. Drop your grand resolutions. Don't become a stupid, jealous wife—don't! Come with me—run in debt—live faster than ever—show yourself at the opera in a dress that will draw every eye upon you—or better than that, ride a velocipede in the Park! Do whatever you like, but make it something in that line! People will talk about you, you will get a bad name perhaps, and every one will believe you are a gone case, but you will be saved! At the rate you are driving, you fear you will be run away with and dashed to pieces; so you are frightened and want to jump out. If you do you will be destroyed. Don't jump out—on the contrary, whip up your horses, drive along faster than ever, and the husband of whom you are now jealous will follow you, will be jealous of you, and you will be saved. That's wisdom! That's my advice. [*Rising.*] Will you put on your hat, my dear, and come with me to see the house where the one poor devil shot the other poor devil?

Gil [*Pleasantly.*] No.

B'ness [*Going up c*] Well, you're wrong. Good-by, dear.

Gil Good-by!

B'ness [*Returning.*] Gilberte, I beg of you—if you won't follow my advice, listen to this, at least. If I were in your place, I would stay home for forty-eight hours, and during that time, I would think of nothing, do nothing, but try to become calm.

Gil [*Excitedly rising, and crossing abruptly to L.*] I have never been calmer, or more tranquil.

B'ness Oh! Then good-by, my dear.

[*Exits C. and L. GILBERTE rings bell on table.*]

Enter PAULINE L. 1 E.

Pau Madame.

Gil Has M. Sartorys gone out yet?

Pau I believe not.

Gil Say to him I wish to speak with him.

Pau Yes, Madame.

[*Exits L. 1 E*]

Gil [*Looking at VALREAS' letter.*] Poor fellow! The Baroness was

right; who would ever believe that he could become seriously in love? For he does love me; and he leaves Paris! It is well. [*Tears letter up in little pieces and throws it in fireplace.*] All is over. And now we will see if my dear sister will consent to yield to me the place which is mine.

Enter LOUISE, R. 1 E., dressed for the street, and putting on gloves.

Louise Good morning, Gilberte!

Gil [c.] You are going out?

Enter SARTOR'S L. H.

Sar You wish to speak with me, Gilberte?

Gil [*Merely turning her head.*] Yes! [*To LOUISE.*] Where are you going?

Louise To Madame de Lussy's; she recommends the new governess we have engaged for Georgie.

Gil [*Aside and bitterly.*] We have engaged! [*Aloud.*] I will go myself.

Sar [*Sitting c. Laughingly.*] If you go to Madame de Lussy's I know in advance what will happen. You will both chat for an hour over some new toilet, and never once think of the governess. Let Louise go.

Gil [*Turning away to the L.*] Be it so.

Louise [*Up c. To SARTOR'S.*] Don't forget that you are to go at three o'clock to see about that little property we wish to buy.

Sar [*Gaily.*] I shan't forget, my little man of business.

Gil [*Aside.*] That we wish to buy.

Louise Is that all? Yes—let me see! yes, that is all. By-by. Frou Frou! [*Kisses GILBERTE, and exits c. and L.*]

Sar [*His manner is paternal—a little too paternal, during this scene.*] Well, my darling! [*Brings his chair down c. and makes GILBERTE sit on a stool beside him.*]

Gil [*Holding down her head.*] I wanted to tell you—that is—

Sar Is it something very hard to say, then?

Gil Yes, very hard—it is something like a confession.

Sar [*Earnestly.*] A confession?

Gil I was going to accuse myself—

Sar Ah, I see; we have been extravagant—we have run into debt, Frou Frou? [*Patting her head.*]

Gil [*Impatiently.*] No, it is not that.

Sar Of what have you to accuse yourself then?

Gil Can you not imagine? [*SARTOR'S shakes his head.*] Of having been a little frivolous and giddy—even after our marriage, even after the birth of little Georgie—in fact, of having always remained Frou Frou, and of not having become—

Sar Is that all? Why you almost frightened me. I see nothing very dreadful in all that.

Gil Nothing?

Sar Nothing at all!

Gil But some time ago you spoke differently. No, [*Staring*] you did not speak, but in place of words your face, your silence itself

seemed to utter the fears that troubled you then, and to show me the danger that threatened. *[Putting her hand on his shoulder.]*

Sar Yes, that was two months ago, but since those two months—

Gil Since then—

Sar Louise has been here.

Gil Louise!

Sar All the danger has disappeared; and now if it should please Frou Frou to be more Frou Frou than ever, the harm would not be very great, since in your place Louise does everything.

Gil And how if I wished to attend myself to those things which my sister takes such good care of?

Sar What an idea, now that everything is working so smoothly and safely.

Gil You think everything is safe?

Sar Look around you, my dear Gilberte, and tell me if you ever saw a house better governed than ours since Louise has taken control. See what care she takes of Georgie, and how well she is bringing up the child; and even I myself, have you not noticed that since Louise has been here I have acquired a certain air of content?

Gil *[Earnestly.]* But if I really wished—if I were really resolved to become better and wiser, and to govern myself?

Sar Your zeal is too praiseworthy not to be encouraged, and I will encourage it by all the means in my power, but—

Gil But what?

Sar But if, despite your resolution and my encouragement, this ardor should die out, and at the end of a week, or say a fortnight, my little Gilberte becomes wearied, don't consider yourself bound to continue! Return as fast as you please to your pleasures, your triumphs, and your gaieties; neither my face nor my silence shall reproach you and I shall be content to remain the husband of the prettiest darling and most adored little wife in the world.

Gil *[Rising and speaking quietly.]* That appointment which was offered you, and which you refused on my account?

Sar No, I can not go there now. Government might have felt hurt at my refusal, but on the contrary, I have been treated with marked kindness, and I have now in Paris a position almost equivalent to the other. All's well that ends well, and so you see, you really have not as much to reproach yourself with as you thought.

Gil *[Looks at him peculiarly for a second and then goes to chair near small table.]* What I really see is, that all my beautiful projects are rejected.

Sar Oh, I give you full credit for them.

Gil *[Sarcastically.]* Really.

Sar *[Going to her.]* And I wish to reward you for them. That span of horses you liked so much, and which I thought so expensive.

Gil I don't want them now.

Sar *[Astonished.]* You don't want them?

Enter BRIGARD, C. from L.

Brig Good morning, daughter.

Sar Ah, M. Brigard!

Brig Good morning, my dear boy.

Sar You have come just in time. Gilberte is a little nervous, and you know how to put her in good humor.

Brig [*To GILBERTE.*] Nervous! Now really.

Gil Good morning, father.

Brig Oh, it won't last! You must do me a particular favor daughter. The other day when you were skating in the Park, you wore a new kind of cap—and Madame de Laurens, who saw you in it, wants one just like it. I promised to get the pattern for her! I knew you wouldn't refuse me, your father, and so I promised her.

[*GILBERTE rings bell on table.*]

You really will?

Gil I will give orders to have it brought to you.

Brig That's an angel.

Enter PAULINE, L. 1 E. *GILBERTE whispers to her.* *BRIGARD takes SARTORYS down R. H. corner.*

Brig [*Aside to SARTORYS.*] Hum! my boy, don't mention Madame de Laurens or the cap, to any one outside. I'll do as much for you.

[*Pokes him in the side.*]

Sar [*Gravely.*] As you wish.

[*They go up. PAULINE exits L. 1 E. GILBERTE crosses to sofa R., and sits.*]

Sar [*To BRIGARD.*] I'll leave you with Gilberte, do try and restore her spirits. I don't know what it is affects her to-day.

Brig All right, my dear boy.

[*Goes to mantel L., and arranges his hair before glass.*]

Sar [*To GILBERTE.*] So that span of horses?

Gil No, no! How many times must I tell you?

Sar [*Smiling gaily.*] Well, then, you know I am a positive man, and whether you want them or not, you shall have them.

[*Goes to BRIGARD C., and whispers.*]

Brig She won't have a span? then give her a four-in-hand.

SARTORYS exits C and L. laughing.

Gil [*Aside, feelingly.*] When I want to come back to him and be really and truly his wife, that is how he treats me.

Brig [*Crossing to piano*] Do you know, my love, your husband is a very nice fellow?

Gil After all he is right. Louise is here. I am not needed any more! He speaks to me as if I were a child.

Brig [*Touching the piano.*] Very nice fellow! Very nice! [*GILBERTE bursts into tears. Rising in astonishment and coming round to her.*] What, tears? What does this mean, Gilberte?

Gil [*Turning from him.*] Nothing, father, nothing!

Brig Nothing serious has happened, I hope! And even if it be, am I not here, I, your father?

Gil [*Bitterly.*] Oh, yes!

Brig "Oh, yes!" What do you mean by "Oh, yes?" I know that now and then I may seem to be a little—and then my hair isn't—confound it, but that doesn't prevent my being your father after all.

FROU FROU.

Enter PAULINE, L. 1 E., with cap.

And as your father, I—

Paul Is this what you wished, Madame?

Gil What's that? Yes that's it. [*Takes it, and hands it to her father, and hand holding handkerchief to her eyes.*] That is what you asked for?

Brig [*Taking the cap, but embarrassed*] Being your father as I said—yes. [*Looking at cap.*] That's it! Being your father as I said—

Gil Well, what more do you wish?

Brig Nothing, but—

Gil [*Smiling in spite of herself.*] But what?

Brig Well, that's not the point now. [*Giving cap to PAULINE.*] Have this taken to my carriage. [*Exit PAULINE, C. and L.*] Deuce take me, it shan't be said I haven't done my duty once in my life! Come now, daughter, tell me why you were crying a while ago.

Gil For nothing, father.

Brig For nothing?

Gil Yes, you know there are times when we feel so. [*Sits C.*

Brig Yes, there are moments! I feel that way myself sometimes. But tell me; there is something serious in all this, and the affection I have for you—you don't doubt my affection I hope, and if you have need of a protector, you wouldn't hesitate to fly to my paternal; eh? And those tears—your nerves; eh? Oh, yes, that's it, nerves! I was sure of it! Just my way! We needn't worry any more about it. And now, let's speak of Louise; I might as well attend to her case, now that I am started on family topics. [*Sits beside GILBERTE.*

Gil [*Quickly.*] Louise!

Brig [*Being uncomfortable in chair C., goes to R. and sits in arm-chair.*] Yes, Monsieur de Villaroel comes here pretty often, don't he? I may say very often.

Gil [*Smiling.*] Well, yes.

Brig And you never suspected?

Gil What could I have suspected?

Brig Well, I didn't suspect either. I have two daughters, and I should once in a while suppose that once in a while some one might fall in love with one as well as the other. And that's exactly what has occurred. I have just received a visit from M. de Villaroel, and the reason why he called here so often was—Louise.

Gil For Louise? He proposed for her? [*Rises and goes to BRIGARD.*

Brig Yes, he loves her, and asks her hand.

Gil [*Sitting on BRIGARD's knee.*] Oh, you dear, good papa! you can't imagine how happy this news has made me. There can be no reason for refusing such an offer. Have you spoken to Louise yet?

Brig No, not yet. I would have done so had she been here—and most likely she would have answered me as she has always done—that she don't want to marry.

Gil [*Rising and firmly.*] She must not answer that now.

Brig No, certainly not. She must not! Strange woman your sister—eh? How she dislikes going into society; and her determination

not to marry. Do you know what I think, Gilberte? Louise must have loved some one once.

Gil [*Deeply moved and turning away.*] You think so?

Brig She must once have dreamed of a happiness of which we know nothing, and which she has lost.

Gil [*Turning suddenly.*] Father!

Brig [*Rising abruptly and looking at his watch.*] Well, just turn it over in your mind and see if it doesn't seem probable.

[*Goes to glass, takes his hat up and arranges his hair.*]

Gil But, father—

[*Follows him to c.*]

Brig You can easily find out all about it. Between women, especially between sisters, things may be said which—there, there you must question her. Say to her, too, that M. de Vallaroel is a charming gentleman, high estate, plenty of money, no vices—and she must positively consent to marry him.

Gil [*Resolutely.*] Oh, as for that! [*Shaking her head with determination.*]

Brig You will do all you can to make her consent?

Gil [*Firmly.*] Yes, everything in the world—and she shall consent.

Brig [*c.*] Well, that's fixed. Since you take it in hand there's no need of my bothering about it. [*GILBERTE smiles.*] There, you are smiling again! It does me good to see that! But when I see you cry as you did a little while ago—I feel—there, there! you must not be unhappy, Gilberte! you must not! Do you know that if you took it into your head to be unhappy I should be an abominable father? But you won't, will you? [*One arm around her waist while he arranges his shirt bosom with the other.*] You love your paternal parent too much! You will be happy, if not for your own sake, at least for your dear father's sake. [*Kissing her.*] You promise me, don't you? Good-by. Don't forget to talk to your sister as soon as she comes in. [*About to go.*] Ah, what did I do with that cap? Oh, I remember, it's in my carriage. Tah, tah, Frou Frou! [*Exits c. and L.*]

Gil [*Solus c.*] She will not refuse this time! She can not refuse! But if she should? If she will not leave us—if she will still remain between me and my happiness? What shall I do then? Who will save me from the wretchedness, the fate, to which they drive me. I have no husband, no father, to whom I can turn! Ah! my child, my child is left me. He is *there* and near him I can be strong

Enter VINCENT, c. from L.

Gil What is it?

Vin [*Smiling meaningly.*] Monsieur de Valreas— [*GILBERTE starts.*] He desires to know if Madame—

Gil Valreas I will not— [*Sees VINCENT smile and look at her in a manner of peculiar inquiry.*] Show in M. de Valreas, and tell Pauline to dress Georgie immediately and bring him to me: I will take him out for a walk.

Enter VALREAS c. from L. VINCENT exits, c. and L. GILBERTE turns harshly to VALREAS, who comes forward a single step.

Do you know why I consent to receive you? Because that servant

stood there and seemed to question why I close my doors against you.

Val [*All earnest.*] I have but a few words to say.

Gil So much the better, for I have but a few moments to spare. [*Pauses.*] Why have you come here after that letter which I wrote you? Could you not understand that we must meet no more?

Val In that letter you ordered me to leave Paris.

Gil Well?

Val I leave to-night. Did I not tell you so?

Gil [*More harshly.*] I know very well you told me so, but what proof have I?

Val You have no right to doubt me. To you I never spoke anything but the truth.

Gil [*Softening.*] Very well—you will go. I wish it. You should have gone without trying to see me.

Val I could not.

Gil [*Harshly again.*] You could not?

Val You must not ask too much? Think of what I was, and what I am. Who would recognize me? I would have laughed at any one who would have predicted that I—one day, would feel as I felt after reading your letter. At first I thought I would be strong—leave Paris without seeing, without speaking to you.

Gil That is what you should have done.

Val I did not have the courage. After a few moments this enthusiasm left me—I could think of but one thing—That I was to be separated from you; it overcame me! I thought that if you had the right to ask such a sacrifice of me, I had the right to ask of you a few words at parting; a few words that would give me strength to obey you.

Gil Well, I—

Enter PAULINE, L. 1 E.

Pau Madame—

Gil [*With a joyful cry.*] Ah, Georgie! Bring him to me at once.

Pau But, Madame—

Gil [*To VALREAS, interrupting PAULINE.*] I have no time to spare. I am going out; you understand, I am going out with my son.

Pau Master Georgie is not here, Madame.

Gil [*Aghast.*] Not here?

Pau No, Madame. Mademoiselle Louise took him with her when she went out.

Gil [*Violently.*] Louise! [*Trying to calm herself.*] Very well, Pauline—since Mademoiselle Louise has taken him out, that will do. [*Exit PAULINE, L. 1 E. GILBERTE sinks into a chair, L.*] Not even my child is left. She has taken from me everything.

Val [*Trembling and coming a step toward her.*] Gilberte!

Gil [*Turning pleadingly to him.*] Oh, you will go, will you not? You must go now, more than ever. Swear to me you will go. You know that I do not love you, that I will never love you. You should know it—and you love me; that is why you must fly me! Understand me well; if I were frivolous, coquettish, as they have said, and bad at heart, I would keep you near me to laugh at your sufferings!

Many women would do this, but I will not. You will go—you will forget me—you must— [VALREAS turns from her.] but not too quickly.

Val [Turning and taking her hand.] Oh, Gilberte! Gilberte!

Gil [Withdrawing her hand.] To-night! You will depart to-night!

Enter SARTORYS, C. from L. VALREAS faces him. GILBERTE turns away

Sar You here, my dear Paul? They did not tell me.

Gil M. de Valreas comes to make his adieux. He leaves Paris to-night.

Sar Not for long, I hope. Paris will not be consoled. [Offering his hand.] Hope to see you back soon. [Crosses to arm-chair near L.

Val Thanks. [Bowing to GILBERTE] Madame!

Gil [c.] Farewell. [Exit VALREAS C. and L.] I have done my duty, let me see if the others will do theirs. [Aside.

Sar [In chair L.] Well, my dear Gilberte, did your father succeed in enlivening you a little?

Gil [Going up and towards R.] What my father said to me was not precisely of a nature to—[Leans over the back of SARTORYS' chair, and as he looks up at her, she looks him full in the face, and says.] Louise is about to leave us.

Sar [Starting abruptly.] What?

[Pause.

Gil [Coldly.] M. de Villaroel has asked her hand in marriage, and she will become his wife.

Sar [Very quickly.] It is impossible.

Gil [Coldly.] What do you mean? A moment ago you made a strange movement, and now you have uttered a still stranger remark.

Sar [Recovering.] I acknowledge, that at first I could not avoid a feeling of selfishness; I was so sure Louise would never leave us. But I was in the wrong, and I regret it.

Gil Then you will speak to her when she comes in?

Sar [Quickly.] Speak to her? Then nothing is decided yet?

Gil No. Louise as yet knows nothing.

Sar Does it not seem to you that you would be better able to—

Gil [c.] I? What have I to do with serious things? Do I understand them, I, Frou Frou? Now if it were to talk about a new toilette with Madame de Lussy. [Throws herself into sofa and doubles herself up like a little girl in a pet.] I will not speak to her. You must do it; and if I have any advice to give you, it is—speak to her so that you will decide her to go. [Markedly spoken.

Sar [Astonished at her tone.] How!

Enter LOUISE, C. from L. GILBERTE during the ensuing scene is immovable, except now and then to look at LOUISE. LOUISE, as she enters, takes chair C. and commences to take off her hat, gloves, &c.

Louise I have seen Madame de Lussy, and I have seen the new governess. She is a very nice person, and will come to us in a few days. [To SARTORYS.] And you—

Sar [Gravely.] I have seen about the purchase. But we have something more serious to speak of now.

Louise More serious! For me?

Sar Yes. A marriage!

Louise What—again?

Sar This time M. de Villaroel. [*Pause.*] Ah, you don't say what, to that, I notice.

Louise Well, M. de Villaroel is one of the most distinguished men of the age. I should of course feel a little pride at his asking for my hand, and I do—and a great deal of joy, too!

Gil [*Interested.*] Ah!

Louise [*Casting off her cloak or mantel.*] Yes, a great deal of joy; for when it is known I have refused to marry a man like him, it will be fully understood that I will marry no one, and then I hope they will leave me alone.

Sar You refuse?

Louise Certainly I refuse. [*Going near him at table and sitting.*] Remember, two months ago I would not come here, but you insisted on it. So much the worse for you; for now that I am here, I mean to stay. [*Laughingly.*]

Sar But let us look at it in the proper light.

Louise [*Rising and speaking with emotion.*] Unless you are displeased with me, both of you; unless those duties which you call wearisome, and which you gave into my charge, have not been well performed—Unless you tell me that in staying here I am useless for your comfort or your happiness—

Sar [*Crossing to her.*] No, Louise—but this has nothing to do with our happiness. It is of yours I speak.

Louise Of mine?

Sar Of yours.

Louise Then let me stay with you two, if you wish to make me happy, because I can not be happy if I am not here. Woman's character, to be complete, has two sides; one is all youth, grace and pleasure—[*Indicating GILBERTE.*] that is hers. The other, which is all gravity and busy employment, is the one which pleases me the most. This side, necessary, but ungracious, which you asked of me as a duty, I now ask of you as my happiness. Besides, if you should send me away now, I would not go.

Sar [*Crossing to GILBERTE.*] You hear what she says?

Gil Yes.

Sar You know as well as I that when she makes up her mind, it is useless. [*Laughs.*]

Louise [*Gaily.*] Altogether useless.

Sar [*To GILBERTE.*] Still, if you would like to try yourself.

Gil [*Shortly, and putting her feet to floor.*] Yes, I will try.

Sar [*C., to LOUISE, and taking her hand.*] I don't change my opinion, my dear Louise, and I think you ought to consent. But you give me so much pleasure by your refusal, that I have not the heart to insist further. Not now, at least.

Louise Not now, and never.

Sar [*Pressing her hands, and gently.*] You will repent when the right one comes

Louise You know very well that what I say to-day I shall say always.

[*Exit SAERTORYS, L. 1 B. Music pp till GILBERTE speaks. LOUISE goes up towards c. to exit, but is intercepted by GILBERTE who has risen and passing behind the piano comes face to face with her.*

Gil Where are you going?

Louise To get a book that Georgie asked me for; it is in your room.

Gil [*Resolutely.*] Georgie will wait for his book. [*LOUISE steps back astonished at the tone and look of GILBERTE, leaving her in c. LOUISE L. C. below GILBERTE.* You refuse this marriage which is offered you?

Louise Yes, I refuse.

Gil [*Smiling sarcastically.*] And is it that you may continue to watch over our happiness that you do so?

Louise Gilberte!

[*Shrinking back a step.*

Gil [*Trying to suppress anger.*] A worthy reason. [*Advancing a step.*] And I ought to thank you for it. But what I have to blame you for is, that you have not equally divided your attentions in this household between my husband and me. And for having bestowed them more cheerfully on one than on the other.

Louise [*Putting down things*] Sister, what do you mean?

Gil [*Bitterly.*] That you have lavished your care upon my husband, upon my child, but me you have neglected. And there you were wrong, because, had you looked around you, you would have seen that of all the dangers which threaten this home that you wished to preserve so much, the gravest of all might strike it through me.

Louise I do not understand.

Gil [*Rapidly.*] Do you not? Within this hour M. de Valreas was here at my side swearing that he loved me. [*LOUISE starts in fear.*] I told him that I loved him not.

Louise [*Breathless.*] Well?

Gil It was false; I love him.

Louise And you confess it?

Gil [*Sarcastically.*] This, then, my sister, is something which you did not see with all your care, and it is what you should have seen before everything if you had performed well that duty which you accepted at such heroic cost. [*LOUISE about to speak. GILBERTE waves her to silence.*] But I suppose that the absorbing attention you bestowed on one side hindered you from watching the other.

Louise [*Coldly.*] What you wish to tell me is that you love Valreas—is that it?

Gil Two months ago there was no such thing; but within those two months many things have passed. That love has had time for birth and growth! What at first was but a jest has become a danger—a danger so great that when I saw you had no thought of me, to saving me, I tried to save myself. My husband, my child, I tried to return to them. But my child was no longer mine; you had come between us.

Louise I will go, Gilberte.

Gil You have estranged my child, and for my husband—

Louise Your husband!

Gil When I saw you just now beside him, I recalled the past—my suspicions of other times and my suspicions to-day.

Louise Your suspicions?

Gil Do not force me to say what I do not wish.

Louise Say it! Speak the words which burn on your lips—that four years ago I loved your husband—is that it?

Gil You dare speak of it?

Louise Yes, I did love him, but it was you that *he* loved, and, believing that your happiness depended upon his love, I took your hand myself, and placed it in his, and that nothing should hinder your consent to that marriage I pretended to be glad, and yet, at that very moment, I sacrificed my heart for you—for I loved him! I loved him!

Gil [*Sarcastically.*] And, by the next day, I suppose, your love had vanished.

Louise Not so. I suffered long, and perhaps my sufferings and sacrifice merited another recompense than this. You have forgotten your repeated efforts to make me come and live with you, and the surprise that my refusal caused you. You have forgotten that I did refuse to come.

Gil [*Sternly.*] But you finished by consenting.

Louise Because I had conquered myself; because I was sure I no longer loved him.

Gil [*Bitterly.*] Indeed! Was it not rather because you thought the moment better chosen?

Louise Gilberte, you shall not speak to me so.

Gil [*Commandingly.*] It is the truth.

Louise Gilberte! Sister! Was it not you who wished me—

Gil Ah, you knew well how to make me wish what you desired most; you are wise, my sister, and I was but a child in your hands. You knew well what you were doing after you had married us—after you had sacrificed yourself for us—since you knew one instant would suffice for you to regain all that you boast you have given me, since now he is *yours*.

Louise [*Terrified.*] Gilbert, I will go. I will leave you.

Gil Another sacrifice still. No! It is not you this time who will go.

Louise What mean you?

Gil Heaven is my witness that I was sincere in my effort to resist, to defend myself; but I am not strong enough for a lifetime of such efforts.

Louise [*Motionless with horror.*] What are you about to do?

Gil [*Going up c.*] I acknowledge that I am conquered! Take my place! I give it to you.

Louise Where are you going?

Gil Ask me nothing.

Louise Gilberte!

Gil [*In c. doors, turns and faces LOUISE and speaks furiously.*] Husband, child, everything you have taken from me! Keep them well!

[*Closes the doors.*]

Louise [Running to door and beating against it.] *Gilberte! Gilberte!*

ACT DROP.

ACT IV.

SCENE.—*The palace of the Barberini, at Venice. An ancient interior. The arched balcony and columned entrance is seen at the L., occupying the stage to 3d grooves. The entrance from the canals is through the arch L. C. The entrance and exit for interior is L. 1 E. The canal, and view of Venice under a full sunset light, is seen upon the R. up stage, and through the balcony off L. Stage down R. for 2 entrances. Garden. R. H. Garden sofa, L. H. 1 rustic chair L. of table, and 1 up stage. ZANETTO discovered leaning out of balcony L. C., listening to Barcarole, which is being sung by a party passing in gondola at back. After Barcarole, enter PAULINE, L. 1 E.*

Pauline Zanetto! Ah! there you are, as lazy as ever! Come, stir your idle Italian legs. Madame wants you to run to the lodgings of the Count, and tell him she will expect him at tea. [Seeing that he doesn't stir.] Come, wake up—look lively—run!

Zanetto Run? Whoever saw Zanetto run? It's not my business to run of errands.

Pau It isn't? What is your business then?

Zan My business is to carry with grace the costume of the native gondolier of sunny Italy; to sing the national airs, and to eat, drink and be merry, like a true sunny Italian. Nevertheless, to oblige Madame, I will carry the message to Monsieur de Valreas.

Pau I thought you would, since he gives its value in gold for every message you bring him.

Zan [Coming down c.] Ah! we descendants of sunny Italy are very poor, and the Count is very liberal. Not so liberal as your lady, though. See how beautifully she has fitted up this old palace.

Pau Yes; and she's only been here six weeks, to do it all. But it cost her a deal of money to make your dirty old palace fit to live in.

Zan Money! I believe you. And talking of money [Pulls paper out of his pocket.] look at this.

Pau What's that? One of your Italian love songs, dedicated to me? [Taking paper.]

Zan No; it's a little bill, dedicated to your lady. And here's another. They amount to 2000 francs; not much for such a princess as your lady, but a fortune for us poor sons of sunny Italy.

Pau [Taking bills.] All right, my sunny Italian. And now go.

Zan I'll fly. [Aside.] No doubt I'll meet the Count on the way here. I always do. And of course he'll give as much for half the distance as the whole.

[Starts off lazily L. C.]

Pau Well, I've heard of romantic Italy, and romantic Venice; but when they send in their bills, where's the romance? Ah! [Looking at bill.] 2,000 there, and 2,000 here, and more thousands. again [Taking other bills from pocket.] make a pretty tidy sum for somebody to settle

GILBERTE enters from L. 1 E.

Gil You sent my message, Pauline?

Pau Zanetto has just gone, Madame. [PAULINE hides bills behind her.] I must speak to her of these things, some time.

Gil What are you hiding there? What papers are those?

Pau Me! oh! these—[Looking at bills.] these—these are—bills, Madame.

Gil Bills?

Pau I did not want to worry you, Madame; but the tradespeople have asked for money.

Gil Money? Sure; I had not thought of that. Give them to me. And so I am in debt. Don't be afraid, Pauline; they shall be paid [Goes up to window.]

Enter ZANETTO L. C. with newspaper and a letter.

Zen I just got these from the postman; and I thought I'd better bring them in. [Gives them to PAULINE.]

Pau [Aside to ZANETTO.] Why didn't you go with your message to Monsieur Valreas?

[ZANETTO winks, points to L. 4 E., and shows money in his hand, and then goes off, L. 1 E. PAULINE gives letter to GILBERTE, who opens and reads.]

Gil Ah! from the doctor.

[Then leans her head on her hand at table. PAULINE puts paper on table.]

Pau [Timidly, after a pause.] Pardon, Madame!—Madame said the letter was from the doctor?

Gil [Moved.] And you wish to know what he says? Ah! kind Pauline.

Pau Little Georgie—Madame?

Gil He is better. The news is good; very good.

Pau I am so glad, Madame, that the news is good.

Gil [Kissing the letter.] Yes; he is better; and [With an effort to conceal feeling.] his father, who, for a month past, was thought to be in danger—is saved. That, too, is what you wished to know, is it not?

Pau Yes; Madame.

[GILBERTE buries her head in her hands. PAULINE, with a pitying glance, exits quietly, L. 1 E.]

Gil [After a pause.] One moment of anger, and this is what it has brought me. [Rises.] Well, it is too late now.

Enter VALREAS, L. C.

Val Gilberte!

[Puts his hat on chair, and takes her hand, without enthusiasm.]

Gil [Eagerly.] Valreas!

Enter ZANETTO, L. 1 E., with tea service, which he places on table R.

Val [Taking off his gloves.] I am a little late.

Gil Now that you are here?

Zen Your excellencies are served.

Gil That will do. Go. [*Exit ZANETTO, L. 1 E.*] Come. [*To VALREAS. Goes to table and begins to serve tea.*]

Val But you ought to know the reason ; for of course there must be a reason.

Gil [*Pauses as she pours out tea.*] A reason ?

Val Yes ; my mother has been here these three days.

Gil [*Sadly. Laying down tea-pot.*] Ah, yes ! I knew.

Val [*Sitting at table.*] You knew ?

Gil For three days you have come late, like to-day. It was the first time, and you seemed strange. I could not tell why ; and so, when you left me yesterday—

Val Yesterday ?

Gil [*Trying to smile.*] Why, a veiled lady in a gondola followed a young gentleman who stepped into another gondola—nothing more natural, in Venice, you know ? And that is how I discovered [*Her voice trembling.*] that your mother was here.

[*Turning from him—face to front.*]

Val [*Leaning over table.*] And you did not speak to me about her ?

Gil [*Huskily.*] I did not dare. I was afraid.

Val [*Smiling.*] Afraid ?

Gil [*Going to him.*] Yes ; but I don't feel afraid now, for you smile, and that reassurès me.

Val But why should you fear ?

Gil [*Sinking on stool beside him.*] She hates me, does she not ?

Val My mother loves me too much to hate any one— [*Stops.*]

Gil [*Looking into his face, and taking his hands in hers.*] Any one who loves you. Why do you not say it ?

Val [*Kindly.*] Any one who loves me. There.

Gil [*Breathlessly.*] But she would separate us ?

Val She is going to pass part of the winter at Rome. She wanted me to accompany her ; so she said.

Gil [*Same.*] And you ?

Val Could you doubt me ? My mother leaves to-morrow ; and she goes alone.

Gil Alone ? Do not the Baron and Baroness de Cambri go with her ?

Val Ah ! you know that they—

Gil Yes ; I know they are here. [*Sadly.*] Why should I conceal it ? I had hoped the Baroness would have come to see me.

[*Hangs her head.*]

Val [*Tenderly.*] Gilberte !

Gil [*With warm emotion, but not loudly.*] What matters it ? What matters if they all turn from me, so that you remain ? All my life is in your hands, now. I ought to remember that ; and—and— [*Tears.*] I will be happy so long as you do not forget me.

Val [*Frefully.*] Why do you speak so ? You know that I will never forget—

Gil [*Brushing away her tears.*] Yes ; I know—I know.

[*Leaves his side and returns to table as ZANETTO enters with dish of fruit, which he places on table.*]

Val Zanetto, give me the newspapers.

Zan Here's the *Figaro*, excellency.

[*Hands paper, and after fumbling about table for a bit, and observing that neither speak while he is present.*]

Zan The sunny Italian is evidently not wanted. [*Exits L. 1 E.*]

Val It feels like home again, to read a Paris paper. Halloa! first night at the Palais Royale. Commences at 8.

Gil [*Smiling.*] We shan't be in time.

Val No; we're rather far off, in the first place—and then the paper is three days old.

Gil [*Rising and leaning over his shoulder.*] And what was the news, three days ago?

Val Let me see; Isthmus of Suez—visit of the Empress—the rain has played the deuce with the crops. That's not interesting.

Gil Not very. And what else?

Val More isthmus—more—ah! here are the theaters.

Gil Ah! how I used to love them. What are they playing?

Val "The Last Day of Happiness," um! "A Wife's Honor," at the Odéon, um! "Patrie," at the Porte St. Martin. Ah! [*Sighs.*]

Gil [*Trying to conceal her feelings.*] A new opera by Verdi, at the Italiens—

Val And at the Gymnase. Ah! Gilberte.

[*Looks up from paper. Their eyes meet.*]

Gil [*Hands on the back of his chair.*] Paul. [*Both remain silent for a moment. The paper falls to his feet; and he speaks in a voice grave and sad.*]

Val What are you thinking of, Gilberte?

Gil You are not sorry for all this?

Val Gilberte!

Gil Say you are not sorry.

Val [*Throwing off his gravity and putting his arm about her waist as she stands beside him.*] Why, certainly not?

Gil And you love me still, do you not?

Enter PAULINE, L. C.

Well, what is it, Pauline?

Pau The Baron de Cambri, Madame; and the Baroness.

Gil [*With joy, and making step towards door.*] Ah!

[*The BARONESS enters, and the two embrace long and lovingly.*]

Bar My darling child!

Gil [*Through her tears.*] It was so good of you to come.

P'ness [*Taking her towards sofa, L.*] At first the Baron would not come with me; but I ran away, and here I am.

[*They sit on sofa, their arms about each other.*]

Enter BARON, L. C., first putting in his head.

Baron Ha! I thought better of it, and so I came.

Val Ah! my dear Cambri.

[*They shake hands.*]

Baron I say I thought better of it. My wife wanted to come alone; but I always make it a point, when my wife wants to go anywhere

alone, to come after her directly. It is a good deal of trouble, physically, but it makes my mind easy. When you are married, follow my example. Motto for husbands: Be attentive, and you will be happy.

Val You see, Madame.

[*BARON bows to GILBERTE.*

B'ness Take him away with you, Valreas. He is always in the way.

Baron My love, that's my way. But I say, Valreas, [*bringing him down R. C., and speaking in a low tone.*] Sartorys is here.

Val [*Starting.*] Sartorys! [*Pause; then suppressing emotion, and taking BARON'S hand.*] I see. You have permitted your wife to come here, so that if anything should happen, Gilberte would not be left alone.

Baron Exactly!

Val [*Aside.*] Poor Gilberte!

Baron You don't seem very happy. You must have known, of course, that he'd come some time. Human nature, you know; human nature.

Val There are some things which we are bound to expect, and yet which seem to be always far off; [*Smiling.*] and death is one of them.

[*Goes towards ladies.*

Baron [*Aside.*] "And death is one of them." Any man who talks in such a tone of voice as that, is sure to be popped over at the first shot.

Val [*To ladies, smiling.*] You have much to say to each other, I suppose?

B'ness Indeed, we have.

Val [*Taking his hat.*] We will go, if you like, and leave you to chat a little.

Gil [*Tenderly.*] You will return soon?

Val Oh, yes! The Baron will come back after Madame, and I will return with him.

Baron [*Aside. Going up.*] Yes; if Sartorys don't finish him.

B'ness Don't be long.

Val Oh, expect us soon. [*Bows, and turns to BARON, aside.*] Will the Baroness tell her?

Baron [*Same.*] The Baroness don't know that Sartorys is here.

Val [*Returning to GILBERTE, and taking her hand over back of sofa and kissing it.*] Farewell, Gilberte.

[*With deep emotion.*

Gil Until we meet again?

Val Until we meet again.

[*Exits L. C.*

Baron [*Aside and following him.*] "Until we meet again." If that young man don't shoot quicker than he talks, he's a goner.

[*Exits after VALREAS.*

Gil [*To BARONESS.*] Tell me everything. Everything that has passed.

B'ness At Paris?

Gil Georgie! My child!

B'ness He is much better. I saw him in the park.

Gil You have seen him?

B'ness Yes; with his governess. I kissed him once for myself, and I don't know how many times for you.

Gil [*Pressing her hand silently, and turning away for an instant.*] Thanks! thanks! And—Louise?

B'ness She has gone back to her father's. She went back after it was certain that M. Sart—[*Checks herself.*] after the doctors declared him out of danger. She and her father have returned to the old house at Charmarettes.

Gil [*Sadly.*] Charmarettes! [*To herself with a stifled sigh.*] Home!

B'ness Yes.

Gil [*After a pause.*] And me? Do they speak of me?

B'ness Not a word.

Gil Am I wholly forgotten?

B'ness Why, you know, my dear—after six weeks! Of course, for the first fortnight every one had something to say. But don't be afraid; every one took your part. And when Sartorys' lawyer told all Paris how you had sent to him the deeds conveying your entire dowry—two millions, I believe—to little Georgie—well, after that, nothing was heard against you. The severest among our sex began to plead your cause. Ah! such courage is a fine thing, my dear, and precious rare, too.

Gil [*In half tones.*] Then I am not overwhelmed with reproaches?

B'ness Reproaches, my dear! They know that you are happy, and you are very much envied.

Gil [*Drooping her head.*] Happy?

B'ness Of course you are happy!

Gil Yes; I am happy. [*With a sort of terror.*] What would become of me if I were not? [*They rise.*]

B'ness Do you know that you have an elegant place—this old palace? [*Looking off, through her glass.*] Delightful view! You must be happy here! How much he must love you! I noticed his expression when he left you, now. At first, I was afraid to come, for fear I should find you miserable; but it's all right.

Gil Yes; he loves me. Why did I not marry him when—do you know you recalled it all when you spoke of home—a' the Charmarettes? You remember five years ago?

B'ness Yes; I remember.

Gil If I had married him, I would not now be here.

B'ness Ah, my child! the old regret—the old sigh of the broken heart—"It might have been."

[*Puts her hand on GILBERTE's head, kindly, as she buries her face in her hands.*]

Enter PAULINE, L. C., in consternation.

Pau Madame! Madame!

Gil [*Rising in alarm.*] What is it?

Pau He is here!

[*Whispers in GILBERTE's ear, and points towards C. door. GILBERTE half staggers against table.*]

G [*To BARONESS.*] Go—I beseech you.

B'ness Who is it?

Gil [*Pointing to door L.*] Quick! Enter there. Do not come till I call you.

B'ness [*As if comprehending.*] Gilberte! My dear Gilberte!

Gil [*In her arms.*] You will not leave me? [*With tone of terror, and quickly.*] I may have need of you. Promise me!

B'ness I promise you.

[*Music till SARTORYS enters.*]

[*Kisses her, and exits L.* GILBERTE motions PAULINE to retire, who goes off door L. GILBERTE stands C., leaning against table; her face up stage, towards SARTORYS, who enters L. C., very pale, and frightfully changed.]

Gil [*As if shrinking from an apparition.*] You?

Sar I.

Gil I knew that you had been very, very sick; that you were almost—

Sar Yes, they told me that I was so ill, I must not hope. But you see I am not dead. When sufficient of my strength returned to me, as I had some business to conclude with you, I came.

Gil Some business—with me?

Sar Yes, about—[*He braces himself against back of chair. GILBERTE goes towards him; he recovers himself with emotion.*] 'Tis nothing. I beg your pardon. I am still very—very—my throat is on fire—water—I can hardly speak—

Gil Water? [*Goes to table, pours water in one of the glasses, and brings to SARTORYS, who, noticing the double set on the table, points to them and refuses to take the glass. GILBERTE, in despair, staggers back to table and sets down the glass.*] Heaven help me!

Sar It was about your dowry.

Gil My dowry?

[*Turning towards him again.*]

Sar Yes, the money which you have sent to Paris. You must take it back again. I will not leave you exposed to—

Gil I have already said—I do not need it!

Sar I know, I know, but you must.

Gil No, I will take nothing—

Sar Will you then force me to give you another reason. [GILBERTE looks at him with frightened countenance.] I do not wish my son ever to touch one cent of that money. I will not have it, you understand?

Gil [*Sinks into chair.*] Yes.

Sar And so that no one else should be compelled to tell you, I have come myself; and I leave you this.

[*Lays large envelope, heavily sealed, on table beside her and takes one step towards door.*]

Gil You are going?

Sar Yes, now that everything is terminated—

Gil [*With sudden recollection.*] Valreas. You are going to fight him?

Sar Yes! You expected it, did you not? And I swear to you, if I had had the strength to come sooner—

Gil [c.] You, you fight, and for me? For me? [*Hysterical laugh.*] Frou Frou! Think of it—Frou Frou means frivolity, trifles, dresses. What fearful fate, is it, then, which throws me amongst things so terrible as bloodshed and death. [*He starts toward door; she stops him by running before and throwing herself at his knees, clasping her hands before him.*] You shall not fight! What! a man like you to risk a precious life,

and for a woman like me? [*Tearfully.*] There must be some other way to satisfy your honor.

Sar [*Bitterly.*] My honor!

Gil The world, no matter what you may do, can never doubt your courage!

Sar You are mistaken if you believe it is of *my honor* I think now, or that I have troubled myself one instant with what the world has thought of your fault or what it may think of my vengeance. I am not a husband who comes to kill the lover of his wife! I loved you—you have betrayed me because you love another—and I shall try to kill that other—that is all. [*Goes toward door.*]

Gil No, no, I alone am guilty. Crush me, but me alone.

[*Takes his hand—he tries to release himself.*]

Sar Leave me.

Gil What vengeance do you want? I dare not speak of death for myself—I would not have the courage to die—but there are convents—close by there is one—take me there—I will go gladly—let its gates close upon me and never again shall you hear of the woman who has offended you.

Sar [*Still struggling to get away*] I told you—

Gil Is that not enough?—Think of some other punishment—anything—but do not condemn me to live with the horrible thought that a man has died through me!

Sar [*Trying to unclasp GILBERTE's fingers.*] All this is useless

Gil Mercy!

Sar No!

Gil Henri!

Sar Call me not!

Gil Do not go—I will be your slave—I will love you!

Sar Wretch!

[*Repulses her; she faints, still holding his hand; he drags her a few steps, still trying to open her fingers; when he does, she falls across a chair at back; SARTORYS starts to go out; at back he stops, comes back, looks at GILBERTE a few minutes as if demented and BARONESS enters; SARTORYS, without saying a word, points to GILBERTE and exits. Curtain*]

ACT V.

SCENE.—Same as Act 2d, but seemingly neglected; no flowers; no music on piano; a lighted lamp on small table; doors closed; the picture of FROU FROU, which always stood on the easel, is covered with a white cloth. The GOVERNESS and GEORGIE discovered seated near the table, R. Stage half dark. Music at rise of curtain.

Governess [*Reading from story book.*] “The brave young prince at last arrived at the gate of the Magician’s castle. This obstacle would have arrested his course, since all the art and all the strength of the world could not open a door which enchantment kept fast closed,

had it not been for the ring which the Prince wore on his finger and which the fairy had given him to protect him from the evil power of the magician Merlin. By accident, he placed that hand on the bars of the gate. As soon as the talisman touched it it opened and the Prince continued his journey in search of the Princess. After having sought for her for two years, all the world over, he at length had the happiness to find her and conduct her home."

Georgie And why did the Prince seek for the Princess?

Gov Because he loved her.

Georgie And found her at last?

Gov Didn't you hear? "After having sought for her, all over the world, for two years, he at length had the happiness—"

Georgie [*Taking both her hands between his.*] Oh, if you only would—but you musn't tell any one!

Gov If I only would?—what, darling?

Georgie If you only would—we two might start now and go hunting for mamma all over the world.

[GOVERNESS *kisses* GEORGIE.]

Enter ANGELIQUE, L. C.

Ang Mademoiselle!

Gov [*Turning and closing book.*] What is it?

Ang Pauline—Madame's old waiting maid—

Gov [*Rising.*] Madame's old waiting maid!

Ang [*GEORGIE goes forward, listening.*] Yes, she is below and says she would like to see Master Georgie.

Gov [*Drawing GEORGIE to her.*] But—I don't know that I can permit it.

Ang Ah! Mademoiselle—poor thing! She says she will remain but a moment.

Gov I really don't know if I can allow—nor do I know if I can deny—

Enter PAULINE, C.

Pau Mademoiselle, I beg you—!

[ANGELIQUE *exits*, C.]

Georgie [*Running to PAULINE.*] It's Pauline! Oh, Pauline!

[PAULINE *stoops on her knees and covers the child with kisses.*

Pau You know me, Master Georgie?

Georgie Yes, I knew you right away.

Pau How tall you have grown, and how pretty!

Georgie I haven't seen you for such a long time.

Pau Yes, a long time—more than six months.

Georgie Why did you go away?

Pau [*Looking down.*] Why?

Georgie And mamma? Where is she?

Pau [*Faltering.*] Mamma!—Georgie?

Enter SARTORYS, L. H. PAULINE rises hastily.

Sar [*To GOVERNESS.*] Take Georgie to his room, Mademoiselle.

[*He kisses the child.*

Gov [*Crossing L.*] Monsieur, if I have done wrong.

Sar I do not reproach you.

[*Motions for her to remove GEORGIE, and the GOVERNESS exits L. 1 &c. with the child.*]

Pau [*L. c.*] I beg pardon, Monsieur!

Sar It is well. How long have you been in Paris?

Pau Since yesterday.

Sar Are you here—alone?

Pau No, Monsieur; Mademoiselle Louise is here with M. Brigard
and— [*Hesitates.*]

Sar [*Moved.*] She?

Pau [*Low tone, eyes on ground.*] Yes, Monsieur.

Sar [*Half audibly.*] Near me—in Paris!

Pau We were only passing through; to-morrow we go to the South—the doctors say it is absolutely necessary.

Sar The doctors?

Pau Yes, Monsieur, we stopped here to consult them, and I thought that if Madame could have news of her child, it would do her more good than all that the doctors could say to her, so I came without telling anybody what I was about.

Sar Pauline—is she in danger?

Pau Yes, Monsieur.

Sar Not in danger of death, however, not in danger of death?

Pau I think not, Monsieur.

Sar You think not?

Pau I was more afraid of it six months ago, the day that
Monsieur— [*Pauses*]

Sar Speak, I beg of you, Pauline.

Pau I thought Madame was lost; it lasted three days; Madame de Cambri and I nursed her the best we could, but we thought each moment she would die. At the end of those three days, Mademoiselle Louise arrived. Madame did not recognize her at first, but at last she knew her. Mademoiselle Louise took her in her arms and Madame cried; Mademoiselle Louise kept her clasped in her arms, and both cried without saying a word. From that moment, my lady began to improve; after a while she was able to travel and we all returned to Charmarettes—

Sar And there she continued to improve, did she not?

Pau Yes, during the first two months; we hoped, yet she was very pale, and her smile was very sad. Ah, if you had seen her so—and with a plain black dress now, which she always wears—she who used to—

Sar Yes, yes—

Pau And then Madame was always among the poor and tending the sick. At last, what was inevitable, happened. After having passed several nights with a poor old woman—whose life she saved—she fell sick herself of the fever. We called in the physicians—those down there sent us to those up here—the latter have decided what I told you a moment ago—that she must go to the South—that there Madame might recover.

Enter ANGELIQUE, C.

Ang Monsieur, Mademoiselle Louise is below.

Sar Louise!

Pau [*Frightened and taking a step forward to c.*] Ah, Monsieur, if she has come here there must be—

Sar R. c. What do you mean?

Pau [*L. c.*] That Madame must be very ill.

Sar [*Pointing L. H.*] There—there you will find Georgie. You will be able to kiss him before you leave. That way—go quickly.

[*PAULINE crosses and exits L. 1 E. SARTORYS makes a sign to ANGELIQUE who exits C.*]

Enter LOUISE.

Louise [*In doorway c, quickly.*] Georgie—her child!

Sar [*Going a step towards her.*] Louise!

Louise You can not refuse to let her see her child before she dies!

Sar [*Paralyzed.*] Before she!

[*Presses his hand to his heart and bows his head suddenly as if a heavy blow had stricken him.*]

Louise Yes, before she dies.

Sar [*Leaning against chair.*] Ah!

Louise You do not answer?

Sar He is there. [*She makes the step forward; he recovers; motions her; she stops; he rings bell on table.*] He will be brought—you shall take him with you.

Louise I will take him?

Sar [*Fixing penetrating glances upon her.*] Is not that what you ask of me?

Louise Yes, that is what I asked, but I hoped you would have replied differently.

Sar What else do you desire?

Louise I hoped that you yourself would have taken Georgie to her; that you would see her; and that one word of forgiveness—

Sar [*Starting back.*] Forgiveness!

Louise [*Going to him supplicatingly.*] Henri! [*He turns away.*] She is dying.

Sar Dying! Oh, Louise—if I could!—My heart is torn by the most terrible sufferings that a man can bear—but, if by giving my own life, I could save hers—I would not hesitate one moment. I do not speak falsely when I say that, but I would lie if I said that I forgive her.

Louise Have you not had your revenge? After that comes forgiveness. [*SARTORYS sinks into chair, clenching hands.*] Has not the expiation been terrible enough? Have not her sufferings—

Sar Her sufferings! Look around you, at the house—desolate! The child—deserted. Look at me, and tell me which you think has suffered most, she or I?

Louise The good she did to those around her—

Sar [*With intensity, and rising.*] What have I benefited by the good

she has done to others? That does not lessen the blow she has dealt my heart. Why should I forgive her, because of the good she has done them! Will you go ask the poor she aided, the sick she tended, and the dying whom she redeemed to curse her, because of the harm she has done to me?

Louise [Pleading.] She awaits your forgiveness—and she is dying.

Sar [Calmer, but resolute.] You wish me to utter a falsehood—is that it? Well I will do it. I can say that I forgive, but it does not come from my heart. The wound is too deep, the sorrow is too great.

Louis [c.] A sorrow greater than yours has forgiven her.

Sar A greater sorrow than mine? Of whom do you speak?

Louise It is your fault alone if I awaken somber memories. I spoke of that mother—

Sar [Sinking into chair again.] Louise!

Louise Whose son you killed.

Sar [Struck with remorse.] Poor Valreas!

Louise She saw Gilberte dying, and Gilberte, dying, begged her to forgive both herself and you.

Sar And that mother forgave?

Louise She forgave.

Sar [Bitterly.] Ah! you women, it is your religion makes you give the lie to your hearts.

Louise [Reproachfully.] Henri!

Sar [Coldly, and crossing.] Take the child with you.

Enter BRIGARD C. He stops.]

Louise Father!

Sar [Turning.] Monsieur!—you here?

Brig She would come. I could not prevent her.

Louise [Excitedly and going towards BRIGARD.] Gilberte?

Brig Is there?

[Pointing off C. Exit LOUISE, rapidly, c.]

Brig [To SARTORYS.] You will not refuse to see her? It is only to die that she has returned to this that was once her home. *[Music.]*

GILBERTE appears at back supported by LOUISE. She comes forward a few steps and sinks on her knees. BRIGARD takes a step towards her.

Gil [Waving BRIGARD back.] Not you, my father, not you!

[SARTORYS springs forward and raises her in his arms.]

Sar Gilberte! my Gilberte!

Gil [Gazing tenderly at him and in a low tone.] Thank you, thank you. *[SARTORYS supports her to sofa and kneels beside her. GILBERTE, after looking about her with a childish smile.]* At home, at home again.

Sar [Tenderly.] Yes, at home, Gilberte! at home, and you shall not die, you shall always remain here!

[BRIGARD and LOUISE by mantle, l.]

Gil [Smiling.] Always?

Sar [Taking her hand.] Poor Gilberte!

Gil [Gently pressing his forehead and pushing back his hair.] You forgive me, do you not?

FROU FROU.

Sar Yes, Gilberte, with all my soul.

[Music.]

Gil After pressing her hand to her heart, as if seized with a sudden pain, and then, in a foreboding voice.] Georgie, my little Georgie—bring him to me—

Sar [Rising.] Yes, I will go for him.

Gil [As if fearful of dying before he comes.] Now—now—

[SARTORYS exits quickly, L. H. LOUISE darts to GILBERTE'S side.

Gil [Observing BRIGARD who is leaning on mantle, back to audience.] Poor father!

Re-enter SARTORYS, with GEORGIE, followed by PAULINE, who goes to back of sofa by GILBERTE.

Georgie Mamma! [Breaks away from his father and runs to her.

Gil [With a wild cry, half rising.] Georgie!—my son!—my child!

[She takes the child in her arms and keeps him some minutes.

Georgie You have come back at last, mamma?

Gil Yes, but not for a long time, my Georgie. Let me kiss you again—once more. [She kisses the child repeatedly.] Louise! [Half fainting from emotion, she resigns him.] He is yours. I give him to you.

Louise [Who has come to the front of the couch.] Sister!

Gil Yes, to you! [Taking SARTORYS' hand, who is behind sofa.] Once before—here—I said the same thing. Forgive me—forgive me all. Come close, both, and promise me, promise me! Ah!

[Hand to heart.

Sar You will not die, my Gilberte, you must not!

[BRIGARD joins group about the couch.

Gil [Looking on the group about her.] Not die? when I am so happy?

Brig My daughter!

Gil Do not pity me—be glad, my father. What had I to expect for my sin?—to die abandoned—forsaken! Instead, I die amid all my own—who love me. Happy, so happy?

Sar [Taking her hand and kneeling.] Ah, Gilberte, it is not you who need forgiveness, it is I.

Gil Forgive you for—for what? For having loved me too well? Ah! that has been my misfortune, all have loved me too well.

Louise [Sobbing.] Gilberte!

Gil And that is why I die—so happy. [Falling back.] Ah!

All [Believing her dead.] Gilberte!

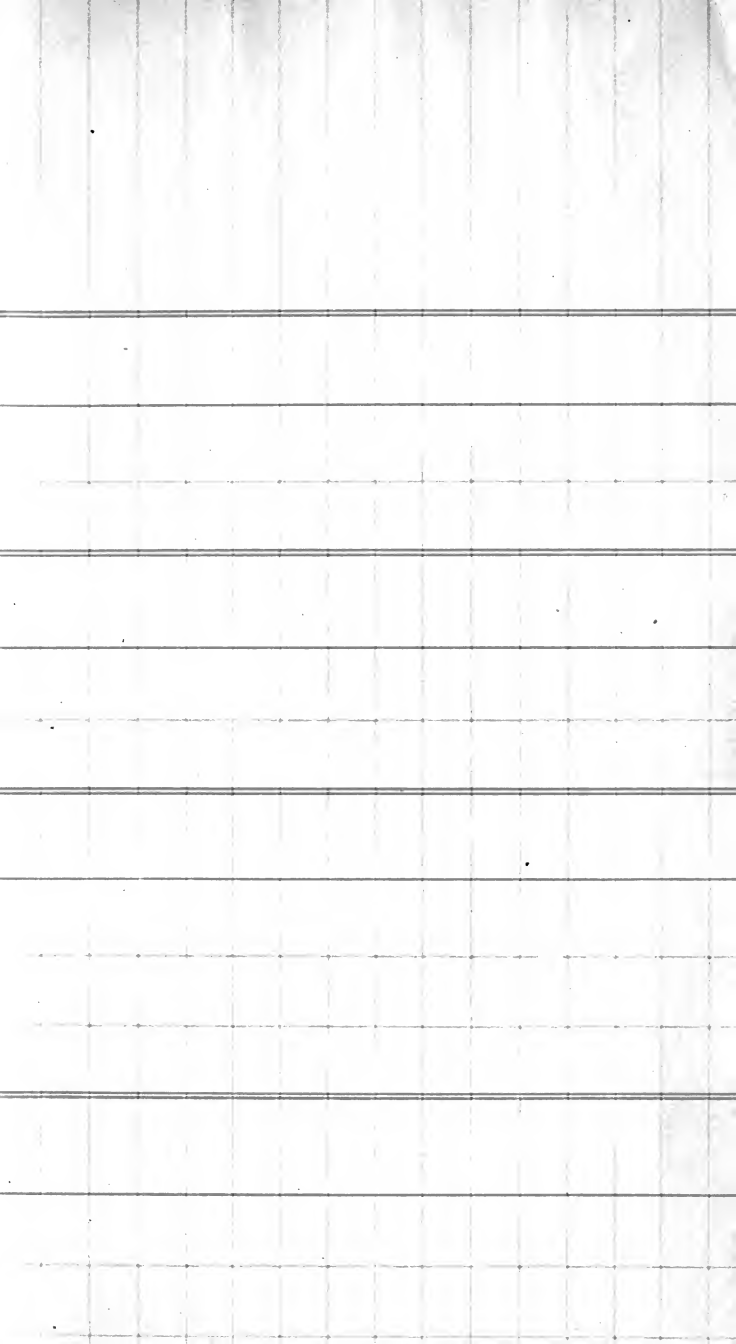
Gil [Supported by SARTORYS who places his arm tenderly about her as she raises her head.] Louise—where are you?—Louise! [LOUISE places a hand in GILBERTE'S without lifting her head.] Let me tell you—when I am dead—deck me out as beautifully as in the by-gone happy days—not in this black robe. Among my ball-dresses, you will find a white one, you know, the skirt is covered with little roses; that is the one I want; don't forget—and you will see how handsome I shall be.

Sar Oh! Gilberte! Darling!

Gil [Sadly smiling—her eyes upturned to his.] You see—still the same—Frou Frou—[Growing insensible.] Poor Frou Frou!

[*Her arms relax— her head falls—SARTORYS lays her gently down and turns sobbing aside.*]

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